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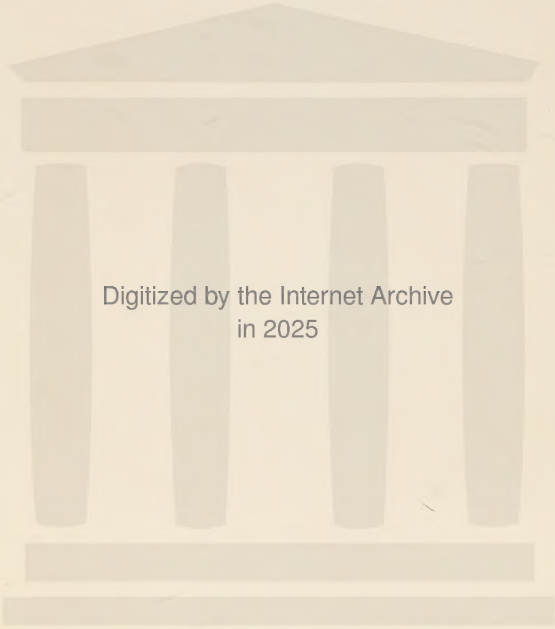
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THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE

EDITED BY THE REV.

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Editor of "The Expositor"

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NEW YORK
FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
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THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

BY

JAMES DENNEY, B.D.

NEW YORK
FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
LAFAYETTE PLACE
1900

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION, in the scientific sense, is not part of the expositor's task; but it is convenient, especially when introduction and exposition have important bearings on each other, that the expositor should indicate his opinion on the questions common to both departments. This is the purpose of the statement which follows.

(1) The starting-point for every inquiry into the relations between St. Paul and the Corinthians, so far as they concern us here, is to be found in the close connexion between the two Epistles to the Corinthians which we possess. This close connexion is not a hypothesis, of greater or less probability, like so much that figures in Introductions to the Second Epistle; it is a large and solid fact, which is worth more for our guidance than the most ingenious conjectural combination. Stress has been justly laid on this by Holtzmann,[1] who illustrates the general fact by details. Thus 2 Cor. i. 8-10, ii. 12, 13, attach themselves immediately to the situation described in 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9. Similarly in 2 Cor. i. 12 there seems to be a distinct echo of 1 Cor. ii. 4-14. More important is the unquestionable reference in 2 Cor. i. 13-17, 23, to 1 Cor. xvi. 5. From a comparison of these two passages it

[1] *Einleitung*, 2nd ed., p. 255 f.

is plain that before Paul wrote either he had had an intention, of which the Corinthians were aware, to visit Corinth in a certain way. He was to leave Ephesus, sail straight across the sea to Corinth, go from Corinth to Macedonia, and then return, *viâ* Corinth, to Asia again. In other words, on this tour he was to visit Corinth twice. In the last chapter of the First Epistle, he announces a change of plan: he is *not* going to Corinth direct, but *viâ* Macedonia, and the Corinthians are only to see him once. He does not say, in the First Epistle, why he has changed his plan, but the announcement caused great dissatisfaction in Corinth. Some said he was a fickle creature; some said he was afraid to show face. This is the situation to which the Second Epistle directly addresses itself; the very first thing Paul does in it is to explain and justify the change of plan announced in the First. It was not fickleness, he says, nor cowardice, that made him change his mind, but the desire to spare the Corinthians and himself the pain which a visit paid at the moment would certainly inflict. The close connexion between our two Epistles, which on this point is unquestionable, may be further illustrated. Thus, not to point to general resemblances in feeling or temper, the correspondence is at least suggestive between ἁγνὸς ἐν τῷ πράγματι, 2 Cor. vii. 11 (cf. the use of πρᾶγμα in 1 Thess. iv. 6), and τοιαύτη πορνεία in 1 Cor. v. 1; between ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ, 2 Cor. ii. 10, and ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Κ. ἡμῶν Ἰ. Χ., 1 Cor. v. 4; between the mention of Satan in 2 Cor. ii. 11 and 1 Cor. v. 5; between πενθεῖν in 2 Cor. xii. 21 and 1 Cor. v. 2; between τοιοῦτος and τις in 2 Cor. ii. 6 f., 2 Cor. ii. 5, and the same words in 1 Cor. v. 5 and 1 Cor. v. 1. If all these are carefully examined and compared, I think

it becomes extremely difficult to believe that in 2 Cor. ii. 5 ff. and in 2 Cor. vii. 8 ff. the Apostle is dealing with anything else than the case of the sinner treated in 1 Cor. v. The coincidences in detail would be very striking under any circumstances; but in combination with the fact that the two Epistles, as has just been shown by the explanation of the change of purpose about the journey, are in the closest connexion with each other, they seem to me to come as nearly as possible to demonstration.

(2) If this view is accepted, it is natural and justifiable to explain the Second Epistle as far as possible out of the First. Thus the letter to which St. Paul refers in 2 Cor. ii. 4 and in 2 Cor. vii. 8, 12, will be our First Epistle to the Corinthians; the persons referred to in 2 Cor. vii. 12 as "he who did the wrong" and "he to whom the wrong was done" will be the son and the father in 1 Cor. v. 1. There are, indeed, many who think that it is absurd to speak of the First Epistle to the Corinthians as written "out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears"; and who cannot imagine that Paul would speak of a great sin and crime, like that of the incestuous person, in such language as he employs in 2 Cor. ii. 5 ff. and 2 Cor. vii. 12. Such language, they argue, suits far better the case of a personal injury, an insult or outrage of which Paul—either in person or in one of his deputies—had been the victim at Corinth. Hence they argue for an intermediate visit of a very painful character, and for an intermediate letter, now lost, dealing with this painful incident. Paul, we are to suppose, visited Corinth on the business of 1 Cor. v. (among other things), and there suffered a great humiliation. He was defied by the guilty man and his friends, and had

to leave the Church without effecting anything. Then he wrote the extremely severe letter to which ii. 4 refers—a letter which was carried by Titus, and which produced the change on which he congratulates himself in ii. 5 ff. and vii. 8 ff. It is obvious that this whole combination is hypothetical; and hence, though many have been attracted by it, it appears with an infinite variety of detail. It is obvious also that the grounds on which it rests are subjective; it is a question on which men will differ to the end of time, whether the language in 2 Cor. ii. 4 is an apt description of the mood in which Paul wrote (at least certain parts of) the First Epistle to the Corinthians, or whether the language in 2 Cor. ii. 5 ff., vii. 8 ff. is becoming language in which to close proceedings like those opened in 1 Cor. v. If many have believed that it is not, many, on the other hand, have no difficulty in believing that it is; and those who take the negative not only fail to explain the series of verbal correspondences detailed above, but dissolve the connexion between our two Epistles altogether. Thus Godet allows more than a year, crowded with events, to come between them. In view of the palpable fact with which we started, I cannot but think this quite incredible: it is far easier to suppose that the proceedings about the incestuous person took a complexion which made Paul's language in the second and seventh chapters natural than to come to any confident conviction about this hypothetical visit and letter.

(3) But the visit, it may be said, at all events, is not hypothetical. It is distinctly alluded to in 2 Cor. ii. 1, xii. 14, xiii. 1. These passages are discussed in the exposition. The two last are certainly not decisive; there are good scholars who hold the same opinion of

the first. Heinrici, for instance, maintains that Paul had only been once in Corinth when he wrote the Second Epistle; it was the *third* time he was *starting*, but once his intention had been frustrated or deferred, so that when he reached Corinth it would only be his second visit. A case can be stated for this, but in view of chap. ii. 1 and chap. xiii. 2, I do not see that it can be easily maintained. These passages practically compel us to assume that Paul had already visited Corinth a second time, and had had very painful experiences there. But the close connexion of our Epistles equally compels us to assume that this second visit belongs to an earlier date than our first canonical Epistle. We know nothing of it except that it was not pleasant, and that Paul was very willing to save both himself and the Corinthians the repetition of such an experience. It is nothing against this view that the visit in question is not referred to in Acts or in the first letter. Hardly anything in chap. xi. 24ff. is known to us from Acts, and probably we should never have known of this journey unless in explaining the change of purpose which the first letter announced it had occurred to Paul to say: "I did not wish to come when it could only vex you; I had enough of that before."

(4) As for the letter, which is supposed to be referred to in 2 Cor. ii. 4, it also has been relieved of its hypothetical character by being identified with chaps. x. 1—xiii. 10 of our present Second Epistle. In the absence of the faintest external indication that the Epistle ever existed in any other than its present form, it is perhaps superfluous to treat this seriously; but the comment of Godet seems to me sufficiently to dispose of it. The hypothetical letter in question—in which Godet himself believes—must have had two

main objects: first, to accredit Titus, who is assumed to have carried it, as the representative of Paul; and, second, to insist on reparation for the assumed personal outrage of which Paul had been the victim on his recent visit. This second object, at all events, is indisputable. But chaps. x. 1—xiii. 10 have no reference whatever to either of these things, and are wholly taken up with what the Apostle means to do, when he comes to Corinth the third time; they refer not to this (imaginary) insolent person, but to the misbelieving and the immoral in general.

(5) Except in the points specified, the interpretation of the Epistle is little affected by the questions raised in *Introduction*. Even in the points specified it is the historical reference, not the ethical import, which is affected. Whichever view we take of them, we get on the whole substantially the same impression of the spirit of Christ as it lives and works in the soul of the Apostle. It is part of the man's greatness, it is the seal of his inspiration, that in his hands the temporal becomes eternal, the incidental loses its purely incidental character, and has significance for all time. It is the expositor's task to deal with the spiritual rather than the historical side, and it will be sufficient here to indicate in outline what I conceive the series of Paul's relations with the Corinthians to have been.

(6) His first visit to Corinth was that which is recorded in Acts xviii.; according to the statement of ver. 11 it extended over a period of eighteen months. In all probability he had many communications with the Church, through deputies whom he commissioned, in the years during which he was absent; the form of the question in 2 Cor. xii. 17 (*μή τινα ὧν ἀπέσταλκα πρὸς ὑμᾶς κ.τ.λ.*) implies as much. But it is only after

his coming to Ephesus, in the course of his third missionary journey, that personal intercourse with Corinth can have been resumed. To this period I should refer the visit which we are bound to assume on the ground of 2 Cor. ii. 1, xiii. 2. What the occasion was, or what the circumstances, we cannot tell; all we know is that it was painful, and perhaps disappointing. Paul had used grave and threatening language on this occasion (2 Cor. xiii. 2), but he had been obliged to tolerate some things which he would rather have seen otherwise. This visit was probably made toward the close of the three years' stay in Ephesus, and the letter referred to in 1 Cor. v. 9—the one in which he warned the Corinthians not to associate with fornicators—would most likely be written on his return from it. In this letter he may very naturally have announced that purpose of visiting Corinth twice —once on his way to Macedonia, and again on his way back—to which reference has already been made. This letter, plainly, did not serve its purpose, and not long afterwards Paul received at Ephesus deputies from the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. xvi. 17), who apparently brought written instructions with them, in which Paul's judgment was sought more minutely on a variety of ethical questions (1 Cor. vii. 1). Before these deputies arrived, or at all events before Paul wrote the letter (our First Epistle) in which he addressed himself to the state of affairs in Corinth which their reports had disclosed, Timothy had left Ephesus on a journey of some interest. Paul meant Corinth to be his destination (1 Cor. iv. 17), but he had to go *viâ* Macedonia, and the Apostle was not certain that he would get so far (1 Cor. xvi. 10: "But *if* Timothy come," etc.). In point of fact, he does not seem to have

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gone farther than Macedonia ; and Luke in Acts xix. 22 mentions Macedonia as the place to which he had been sent. That he got no farther is suggested also by the fact that Paul joins his name with his own in the salutation of the Second Epistle, which was written in Macedonia, but never hints that he owed to *him* any information whatever on the state of the Corinthian Church. All that he knew of this, and of the effect of his first letter, he learned from Titus (2 Cor. ii. 13, vii. 13 f.). But how did Titus happen to be in Corinth representing Paul? By far the happiest suggestion here is that which makes Titus and the brother of 2 Cor. xii. 18 the same as "the brethren" of 1 Cor. xvi. 12, whose return from Corinth Paul expected in the company of Timothy. Timothy, as we have seen, did not get so far. Paul's departure from Ephesus was apparently hastened by a great peril; his anxiety, too, to hear the effect produced by that letter which had cost him so much—our First Epistle—was very great; he pressed on, past Troas, where a fair field of labour waited for workers, and finally encountered Titus in Macedonia, and heard his report.

(7) This is the point at which the Second Epistle to the Corinthians begins. It falls of itself into three clearly marked divisions. The first extends over chaps. i.-vii. In this the Apostle makes his peace, so to speak, with the Corinthians, and does everything in his power to remove any feeling of "soreness" which might linger in their minds over his rigorous treatment of one particular offender. But embedded in this there is a magnificent vindication of the spiritual apostolic ministry, especially in contrast with that of the legalists, and an appeal for love and confidence such as he had always bestowed on the Church. Chaps. viii. and ix.

form the second part, and are devoted to the collection which was being made in the Gentile Churches for poor Christians in Jerusalem. The third part consists of chaps. x. to xiii. In this Paul confronts the disorders which still assert themselves in the Church; the pretensions of certain Judaists, "superlative apostles" as he calls them, who were assailing his apostolic vocation and subverting his gospel; and the immoral licence of others, presumably once pagans, who used liberty for a cloak to the flesh. He writes of both with unsparing severity, yet he does not wish to be severe. He parts from the Church with words of unaffected love, and includes them all in his benediction.

I

SUFFERING AND CONSOLATION

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in the whole of Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ. But whether we be afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or whether we be comforted, it is for your comfort, which worketh in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: and our hope for you is stedfast; knowing that, as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so also are ye of the comfort."—2 Cor. i. 1-7 (R.V.).

THE greeting with which St. Paul introduces his Epistles is much alike in them all, but it never becomes a mere formality, and ought not to pass unregarded as such. It describes, as a rule, the character in which he writes, and the character in which his correspondents are addressed. Here he is an apostle of Jesus Christ, divinely commissioned; and he addresses a Christian community at Corinth, including in it, for the purposes of his letter, the scattered Christians to be found in the other quarters of Achaia. His letters are occasional, in the sense that some special incident or situation called them forth; but this

occasional character does not lessen their value. He addresses himself to the incident or situation in the consciousness of his apostolic vocation; he writes to a Church constituted for permanence, or at least for such duration as this transitory world can have; and what we have in his Epistles is not a series of *obiter dicta*, the casual utterances of an irresponsible person; it is the mind of Christ authoritatively given upon the questions raised. When he includes any other person in the salutation—as in this place "Timothy our brother"—it is rather as a mark of courtesy, than as adding to the Epistle another authority besides his own. Timothy had helped to found the Church at Corinth; Paul had shown great anxiety about his reception by the Corinthians, when he started to visit that turbulent Church alone (1 Cor. xvi. 10 f.); and in this new letter he honours him in their eyes by uniting his name with his own in the superscription. The Apostle and his affectionate fellow-worker wish the Corinthians, as they wished all the Churches, grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not necessary to expound afresh the meaning and connexion of these two New Testament ideas: grace is the first and last word of the Gospel; and peace—perfect spiritual soundness—is the finished work of grace in the soul.

The Apostle's greeting is usually followed by a thanksgiving, in which he recalls the conversion of those to whom he is writing, or surveys their progress in the new life, and the improvement of their gifts, gratefully acknowledging God as the author of all. Thus in the First Epistle to the Corinthians he thanks God for the grace given to them in Christ Jesus, and especially for their Christian enrichment in all utterance and in all knowledge. So, too, but with deeper grati-

tude, he dwells on the virtues of the Thessalonians, remembering their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope. Here also there is a thanksgiving, but at the first glance of a totally different character. The Apostle blesses God, not for what He has done for the Corinthians, but for what He has done for himself. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation." This departure from the Apostle's usual custom is probably not so selfish as it looks. When his mind travelled down from Philippi to Corinth, it rested on the spiritual aspects of the Church there with anything but unrelieved satisfaction. There was much for which he could not possibly be thankful; and just as the momentary apostasy of the Galatians led to his omitting the thanksgiving altogether, so the unsettled mood in which he wrote to the Corinthians gave it this peculiar turn. Nevertheless, when he thanked God for comforting him in all his afflictions, he thanked Him on their behalf. It was they who were eventually to have the profit both of his sorrows and his consolations. Probably, too, there is something here which is meant to appeal even to those who disliked him in Corinth. There had been a good deal of friction between the Apostle and some who had once owned him as their father in Christ; they were blaming him, at this very moment, for not coming to visit them; and in this thanksgiving, which dilates on the afflictions he has endured, and on the divine consolation he has experienced in them, there is a tacit appeal to the sympathy even of hostile spirits. Do not, he seems to say, deal ungenerously with one who has passed through such terrible experiences, and lays the fruit of them at your

feet. Chrysostom presses this view, as if St. Paul had written his thanksgiving in the character of a subtle diplomatist: to judge by one's feeling, it is true enough to deserve mention.[1]

The subject of the thanksgiving is the Apostle's sufferings, and his experience of God's mercies under them. He expressly calls them the sufferings of Christ. These sufferings, he says, abound toward us. Christ was the greatest of sufferers: the flood of pain and sorrow went over His head; all its waves and billows broke upon Him. The Apostle was caught and overwhelmed by the same stream; the waters came into his soul. That is the meaning of *τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ περισσεύει εἰς ἡμᾶς*. In abundant measure the disciple was initiated into his Master's stern experience; he learned, what he prayed to learn, the fellowship of His sufferings. The boldness of the language in which a mortal man calls his own afflictions the sufferings of Christ is far from unexampled in the New Testament. It is repeated by St. Paul in Col. i. 24: "I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf, and fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." It is varied in Heb. xiii. 13, where the sacred writer exhorts us to go out to Jesus, without the camp, bearing *His* reproach. It is anticipated and justified by the words

[1] The same view is strongly held by Schmiedel. He infers from chap. vi. 9 that Paul's sufferings had been interpreted at Corinth as a divine chastisement; in opposition to this the Apostle shows that they are divinely intended to profit the Corinthians. Hence the opening of the letter is not a simple outpouring of his heart, but is delicately calculated to set aside a reproach without naming it. The same purpose rules in the assumption that the Corinthians will intercede and give thanks on his behalf; it takes for granted their reconciliation to him.

of the Lord Himself: "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup; and with the baptism with which I am baptised shall ye be baptised withal." One lot, and that a cross, awaits all the children of God in this world, from the Only-begotten who came from the bosom of the Father, to the latest-born among His brethren. But let us beware of the hasty assertion that, because the Christian's sufferings can thus be described as of a piece with Christ's, the key to the mystery of Gethsemane and Calvary is to be found in the self-consciousness of martyrs and confessors. The very man who speaks of filling up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ for the Church's sake, and who says that the sufferings of Christ came on him in their fulness, would have been the first to protest against such an idea. "Was Paul crucified for you?" Christ suffered alone; there is, in spite of our fellowship with His sufferings, a solitary, incommunicable greatness in His Cross, which the Apostle will expound in another place (chap. v.). Even when Christ's sufferings come upon us there is a difference. At the very lowest, as Vinet has it, we do from gratitude what He did from pure love. We suffer in His company, sustained by His comfort; He suffered uncomforted and unsustained. We are afflicted, when it so happens, "under the auspices of the divine mercy"; He was afflicted that there might be mercy for us.

Few parts of Bible teaching are more recklessly applied than those about suffering and consolation. If all that men endured was of the character here described, if all their sufferings were sufferings of Christ, which came on them because they were walking in His steps and assailed by the forces which buffeted Him, consolation would be an easy task. The presence

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of God with the soul would make it almost unnecessary. The answer of a good conscience would take all the bitterness out of pain; and then, however it tortured, it could not poison the soul. The mere sense that our sufferings *are* the sufferings of Christ—that we are drinking of His cup—is itself a comfort and an inspiration beyond words. But much of our suffering, we know very well, is of a different character. It does not come on us because we are united to Christ, but because we are estranged from Him; it is the proof and the fruit, not of our righteousness, but of our guilt. It is our sin finding us out, and avenging itself upon us, and in no sense the suffering of Christ. Such suffering, no doubt, has its use and its purpose. It is meant to drive the soul in upon itself, to compel it to reflection, to give it no rest till it awakes to penitence, to urge it through despair to God. Those who suffer thus will have cause to thank God afterwards if His discipline leads to their amendment, but they have no title to take to themselves the consolation prepared for those who are partners in the sufferings of Christ. Nor is the minister of Christ at liberty to apply a passage like this to any case of affliction which he encounters in his work. There are sufferings and sufferings; there is a divine intention in them all, if we could only discover it; but the divine intention and the divinely wrought result are only explained here for one particular kind—those sufferings, namely, which come upon men in virtue of their following Jesus Christ. What, then does the Apostle's experience enable him to say on this hard question?

(1) His sufferings have brought him a new revelation of God, which is expressed in the new name, "The Father of mercies and God of all comfort." The name

is wonderful in its tenderness; we feel as we pronounce it that a new conception of what love can be has been imparted to the Apostle's soul. It is in the sufferings and sorrows of life that we discover what we possess in our human friends. Perhaps one abandons us in our extremity, and another betrays us; but most of us find ourselves unexpectedly and astonishingly rich. People of whom we have hardly ever had a kind thought show us kindness; the unsuspected, unmerited goodness which comes to our relief makes us ashamed. This is the rule which is illustrated here by the example of God Himself. It is as if the Apostle said: "I never knew, till the sufferings of Christ abounded in me, how near God could come to man; I never knew how rich His mercies could be, how intimate His sympathy, how inspiriting His comfort." This is an utterance well worth considering. The sufferings of men, and especially the sufferings of the innocent and the good, are often made the ground of hasty charges against God; nay, they are often turned into arguments for Atheism. But who are they who make such charges? Not the righteous sufferers, at least in New Testament times. The Apostle here is their representative and spokesman, and he assures us that God never was so much to him as when he was in the sorest straits. The divine love was so far from being doubtful to him that it shone out then in unanticipated brightness; the very heart of the Father was revealed—all mercy, all encouragement and comfort. If the martyrs have no doubts of their own, is it not very gratuitous for the spectators to become sceptics on their account? "The sufferings of Christ" in His people may be an insoluble problem to the disinterested onlooker, but they are no problem to the sufferers. What is a mystery, when viewed from

without, a mystery in which God seems to be conspicuous by His absence, is, when viewed from within, a new and priceless revelation of God Himself. "The Father of mercies and God of all comfort" is making Himself known now as for want of opportunity He could not be known before.

Notice especially that the consolation is said to abound "through Christ." He is the mediator through whom it comes. To partake in His sufferings is to be united to *Him*; and to be united to Him is to partake in His *life*. The Apostle anticipates here a thought on which he enlarges in the fourth chapter: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body." In our eagerness to emphasise the nearness and the sympathy of Jesus, it is to be feared that we do less than justice to the New Testament revelation of His glory. He does not suffer now. He is enthroned on high, far above all principality and power and might and dominion. The Spirit which brings His presence to our hearts is the Spirit of the Prince of Life; its function is not to be weak with our weakness, but to help our infirmity, and to strengthen us with all might in the inner man. The Christ who dwells in us through His Spirit is not the Man of Sorrows, wearing the crown of thorns; it is the King of kings and Lord of lords, making us partakers of His triumph. There is a weak tone in much of the religious literature which deals with suffering, utterly unlike that of the New Testament. It is a degradation of Christ to our level which it teaches, instead of an exaltation of man toward Christ's. But the last is the apostolic ideal: "More than conquerors through Him that loved us." The comfort of which St. Paul makes so much here is not necessarily

deliverance from suffering for Christ's sake, still less exemption from it; it is the strength and courage and immortal hope which rise up, even in the midst of suffering, in the heart in which the Lord of glory dwells. Through Him such comfort abounds; it wells up to match and more than match the rising tide of suffering.

(2) But Paul's sufferings have done more than give him a new knowledge of God; they have given him at the same time a new power to comfort others. He is bold enough to make this ministry of consolation the key to his recent experiences. "He comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." His sufferings and his consolation together had a purpose that went beyond himself. How significant that is for some perplexing aspects of man's life! We are selfish, and instinctively regard ourselves as the centre of all providences; we naturally seek to explain everything by its bearing on ourselves alone. But God has not made us for selfishness and isolation, and some mysteries would be cleared up if we had love enough to see the ties by which our life is indissolubly linked to others. This, however, is less definite than the Apostle's thought; what he tells us is that he has gained a new power at a great price. It is a power which almost every Christian man will covet; but how many are willing to pass through the fire to obtain it? We must ourselves have needed and have found comfort, before we know what it is; we must ourselves have learned the art of consoling in the school of suffering, before we can practise it for the benefit of others. The most painfully tried, the most proved in suffering, the souls that are best acquainted with grief,

provided their consolation has abounded through Christ, are specially called to this ministry. Their experience is their preparation for it. Nature is something, and age is something; but far more than nature and age is that discipline of God to which they have been submitted, that initiation into the sufferings of Christ which has made them acquainted with His consolations also, and has taught them to know the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Are they not among His best gifts to the Church, those whom He has qualified to console, by consoling them in the fire?

In the sixth verse the Apostle dwells on the interest of the Corinthians in his sufferings and his consolation. It is a practical illustration of the communion of the saints in Christ. "All that befalls *me*," says St. Paul, "has *your* interest in view. If I am afflicted, it is in the interest of your comfort: when you look at me, and see how I bear myself in the sufferings of Christ, you will be encouraged to become imitators of me, even as I am of Him. If, again, I am comforted, this also is in the interest of *your* comfort; God enables me to impart to you what He has imparted to me; and the comfort in question is no impotent thing; it proves its power in this—that when you have received it, you endure with brave patience the same sufferings which we also suffer." This last is a favourite thought with the Apostle, and connects itself readily with the idea, which may or may not have a right to be expressed in the text, that all this is in furtherance of the salvation of the Corinthians.[1]

[1] The text is incurably perplexed. The variations can be seen in any critical edition. The MS. authority does not justify any confident decision, and the happiest suggestion yet made seems to be that of Professor Warfield, who would omit altogether the words

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For if there is one note of the saved more certain than another, it is the brave patience with which they take upon them the sufferings of Christ. *ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος, οὗτος σωθήσεται* (Matt. x. 22). All that helps men to endure to the end, helps them to salvation. All that tends to break the spirit and to sink men in despondency, or hurry them into impatience or fear, leads in the opposite direction. The great service that a true comforter does is to put the strength and courage into us which enable us to take up our cross, however sharp and heavy, and to bear it to the last step and the last breath. No comfort is worth the name—none is taught of God—which has another efficacy than this. The saved are those whose souls rise to this description, and who recognise their spiritual kindred in such brave and patient sufferers as Paul.

The thanksgiving ends appropriately with a cheerful word about the Corinthians. "Our hope for you is stedfast; knowing that, as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so are ye also of the comfort." These two things go together; it is the appointed lot of the children of God to become acquainted with both. If the sufferings could come alone, if *they* could be assigned as the portion of the Church apart from the consolation, Paul could have no hope that the Corinthians would endure to the end; but as it is, he is not afraid. The force of his words is perhaps best felt by us, if instead of saying that the sufferings and the consolation are inseparable, we say that the

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καὶ σωτηρίας (*and salvation*). The MSS. vary most in regard to these words, inserting, omitting, and transposing them. Hence they are very probably an old gloss, and their omission simplifies both the grammar and the sense.

consolation depends upon the sufferings. And what is the consolation? It is the presence of the exalted Saviour in the heart through His Spirit. It is a clear perception, and a firm hold, of the things which are unseen and eternal. It is a conviction of the divine love which cannot be shaken, and of its sovereignty and omnipotence in the Risen Christ. This infinite comfort is contingent upon our partaking of the sufferings of Christ. There is a point, the Apostle seems to say, at which the invisible world and its glories intersect this world in which we live, and become visible, real, and inspiring to men. It is the point at which we suffer with Christ's sufferings. At any other point the vision of this glory is unneeded, and therefore withheld. The worldly, the selfish, the cowardly; those who shrink from self-denial; those who evade pain; those who root themselves in the world that lies around us, and when they move at all move in the line of least resistance; those who have never carried Christ's Cross,—none of these can ever have the triumphant conviction of things unseen and eternal which throbs in every page of the New Testament. None of these can have what the Apostle elsewhere calls "eternal consolation." It is easy for unbelievers, and for Christians lapsing into unbelief, to mock this faith as faith in "the transcendent"; but would a single line of the New Testament have been written without it? When we weigh what is here asserted about its connexion with the sufferings of Christ, could a graver charge be brought against any Church than that its faith in this "transcendent" languished or was extinct? Do not let us hearken to the sceptical insinuations which would rob us of all that has been revealed in Christ's resurrection; and do not let us imagine, on the other hand, that we can

retain a living faith in this revelation if we decline to take up our cross. It was only when the sufferings of Christ abounded in him that Paul's consolation was abundant through Christ; it was only when he laid down his life for His sake that Stephen saw the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

II

FAITH BORN OF DESPAIR

"For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our affliction which befell *us* in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life: yea, we ourselves have had the answer of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver: on whom we have set our hope that He will also still deliver us; ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplication; that, for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf.

"For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or even acknowledge, and I hope ye will acknowledge unto the end: as also ye did acknowledge us in part, that we are your glorying, even as ye also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus."—2 Cor. i. 8-14 (R.V.).

PAUL seems to have felt that the thanksgiving with which he opens this letter to the Corinthians was so peculiar as to require explanation. It was not his way to burst upon his readers thus with his private experiences either of joy or sorrow; and though he had good reason for what he did—in that abundance of the heart out of which the mouth speaks, in his desire to conciliate the good-will of the Corinthians for a much-tried man, and in his faith in the real communion of the saints—he instinctively stops here a

moment to vindicate what he has done. He does not wish them to be ignorant of an experience which has been so much to him, and ought to have the liveliest interest for them.

Evidently they knew that he had been in trouble, but they had no sufficient idea of the extremity to which he had been reduced. We were weighed down, he writes, in excess, beyond our power; the trial that came upon us was one not measured to man's strength. We despaired even of life. Nay, we have had[1] the answer of death in ourselves. When we looked about us, when we faced our circumstances, and asked ourselves whether death or life was to be the end of this, we could only answer, Death. We were like men under sentence; it was only a question of a little sooner or a little later, when the fatal stroke should fall.

The Apostle, who has a divine gift for interpreting experience and reading its lessons, tells us why he and his friends had to pass such a terrible time. It was that they might trust, not in themselves, but in God who raises the dead. It is natural, he implies, for us to trust in ourselves. It is so natural, and so confirmed by the habits of a lifetime, that no ordinary difficulties or perplexities avail to break us of it. It takes all God can do to root up our self-confidence. He must reduce us to despair; He must bring us to such an extremity that the one voice we have in our hearts, the one voice that cries to us wherever we look round for help, is Death, death, death. It is out of this despair that the

[1] Notice the perfect *ἐσχήκαμεν*. We *had* this experience, and in its fruit—a newer and deeper faith in God—we *have* it still. It is a permanent possession in this happy form. The same idea is expressed in the pft. *ἠλπίκαμεν*, ver. 10.

superhuman hope is born. It is out of this abject helplessness that the soul learns to look up with new trust to God.

It is a melancholy reflection upon human nature that we have, as the Apostle expresses it elsewhere, to be "shut up" to all the mercies of God. If we could evade them, notwithstanding their freeness and their worth, we would. How do most of us attain to any faith in Providence? Is it not by proving, through numberless experiments, that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps? Is it not by coming, again and again, to the limit of our resources, and being compelled to feel that unless there is a wisdom and a love at work on our behalf, immeasurably wiser and more benignant than our own, life is a moral chaos? How, above all, do we come to any faith in redemption? to any abiding trust in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of our souls? Is it not by this same way of despair? Is it not by the profound consciousness that in ourselves there is *no* answer to the question, How shall man be just with God? and that the answer must be sought in Him? Is it not by failure, by defeat, by deep disappointments, by ominous forebodings hardening into the awful certainty that we cannot with our own resources make ourselves good men—is it not by experiences like these that we are led to the Cross? This principle has many other illustrations in human life, and every one of them is something to our discredit. They all mean that only desperation opens our eyes to God's love. We do not heartily own Him as the author of life and health, unless He has raised us from sickness after the doctor had given us up. We do not acknowledge His paternal guidance of our life, unless in some sudden peril, or some impending

disaster, He provides an unexpected deliverance. We do not confess that salvation is of the Lord, till our very soul has been convinced that in it there dwells no good thing. Happy are those who are taught, even by despair, to set their hope in God; and who, when they learn this lesson once, learn it, like St. Paul, once for all (see note on ἐσχήκαμεν above). Faith and hope like those which burn through this Epistle were well worth purchasing, even at such a price; they were blessings so valuable that the love of God did not shrink from reducing Paul to despair that he might be compelled to grasp them. Let us believe when such trials come into our lives—when we are weighed down exceedingly, beyond our strength, and are in darkness without light, in a valley of the shadow of death with no outlet—that God is not dealing with us cruelly or at random, but shutting us up to an experience of His love which we have hitherto declined. "After two days will He revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him."

The Apostle describes the God on whom he learned to hope as "God who raises the dead." He himself had been as good as dead, and his deliverance was as good as a resurrection. The phrase, however, seems to be the Apostle's equivalent for omnipotence: when he thinks of the utmost that God can do, he expresses it thus. Sometimes the application of it is merely physical (*e.g.*, Rom. iv. 17); sometimes it is spiritual as well. Thus in Eph. i. 19 ff. the possibilities of the Christian life are measured by this—that that power is at work in believers with which God wrought in Christ when *He raised Him from the dead*, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Is not that power sufficient to do for the weakest and most

desperate of men far more than all he needs? Yet it is his need, somehow, when brought home to him in despair, that opens his eyes to this omnipotent saving power.

The text of the words in which Paul tells of his deliverance can hardly be said to be quite certain, but the general meaning is plain. God delivered him from the awful death which was impending over him; he had his hope now firmly set on Him; he was sure that He would deliver him in the future also.[1] What the danger had been, which had made so powerful an impression on this hardy soul, we cannot now tell. It must have been something which happened after the First Epistle was written, and therefore was not the fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus, whatever that may have been (1 Cor. xv. 32). It may have been a serious bodily illness, which had brought him to death's door, and left him so weak, that still, at every step, he felt it was God's mercy that was holding him up. It may have been a plot to make away with him on the part of the many adversaries mentioned in the First Epistle (xvi. 9)—a plot which had failed, as it were, by a miracle, but the malignity of which still dogged his steps,

[1] The doubtful words here are καὶ ῥύεται in ver. 10 of the Received Text, from D^{e}, E, F, G, K, etc. ("*and doth deliver*," in the Authorised Version). They are not found in A, D, Syr., Chrys., while the most authoritative MSS., ℵ, B, C, P, have καὶ ῥύσεται ("and *will* deliver," of the Revised Version). Most editors take the last reading, as best attested; but on internal grounds two of the most recent and acute interpreters, Schmiedel and Heinrici, prefer the Received Text. The present tense ("*doth* deliver") presupposes that the danger to which Paul had been exposed in some form or in some sense continued. If this were the case, of course it could not have been, as Hofmann supposes, the shipwreck in which the Apostle spent a night and a day in the deep. Otherwise this would be a plausible and tempting supposition.

and was only warded off by the constant presence of God. Both these suggestions require, and would satisfy, the reading, "who delivered us from so great a death, and *doth deliver*." If, however, we take the reading of the R.V.—"who delivered us from so great a death, and *will deliver*; on whom we have set our hope that He will also still deliver us"—the existence of the danger, at the moment at which Paul writes, is not necessarily involved; and the danger itself may have been more of what we might call an accidental character. The imminent peril of drowning referred to in chap. xi. 25 would meet the case; and the confidence expressed by Paul with such emphatic reference to the future will not seem without motive when we consider that he had several sea voyages in prospect—as those from Corinth to Syria, from Syria to Rome, and probably from Rome to Spain. So Hofmann interprets the whole passage: but whether the interpretation be good or bad, it is elsewhere than in its accidental circumstances that the interest of the transaction lies for the writer and for us. To Paul it was not merely a historical but a spiritual experience; not an incident without meaning, but a divinely ordered discipline; and it is thus that we must learn to read our own lives if the purpose of God is to be wrought out in them.

Notice in this connexion, in the eleventh verse, how simply Paul assumes the spiritual participation of the Corinthians in his fortunes. It is God indeed who delivers him, but the deliverance is wrought while they, as well as other Churches, co-operate in supplication on his behalf. In the strained relations existing between himself and the Corinthians, the assumption here made so graciously probably did them more than justice; if there were unsympathetic souls among them,

they must have felt in it a delicate rebuke. What follows—"that, for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many, thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf" (R.V.)—simple and intelligible as it looks in English, is one of the passages which justify M. Sabatier's remark that Paul is difficult to understand and impossible to translate. The Revisers seem to have construed *τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα διὰ πολλῶν* together, as if it had been *τὸ διὰ π. ε. ἡ. χάρισμα*, the meaning being that the favour bestowed on Paul in his deliverance from this peril had been bestowed at the intercession of many. Others get virtually the same meaning by construing *τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα* with *ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων*: the inversion is supposed to emphasise these last words; and as it was, on this view, prayer on the part of many persons that procured his deliverance, Paul is anxious that the deliverance itself should be acknowledged by the thanksgiving of many. It cannot be denied that both these renderings are grammatically violent, and it seems to me preferable to keep *τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα* by itself, even though *ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων* and *διὰ πολλῶν* should then reduplicate the same idea with only a slight variation. We should then render: "in order that, on the part of many persons, the favour shown to us may be gratefully acknowledged by many on our behalf." The pleonasm thus resulting strikes one rather as characteristic of St. Paul's mood in such passages, than as a thing open to objection.[1] But grammar apart, what really has to be emphasised here is again the com-

[1] To render *διὰ πολλῶν prolixe*, copiously, is at least precarious; and to take *πρόσωπα* as "faces" ("that from many faces upturned in prayer to God"), though lexically admissible, seems on all other grounds out of place.

munion of the saints. All the Churches pray for St. Paul—at least he takes it for granted that they do; and when he is rescued from danger, his own thanksgiving is multiplied a thousandfold by the thanksgivings of others on his behalf. This is the ideal of an evangelist's life; in all its incidents and emergencies, in all its perils and salvations, it ought to float in an atmosphere of prayer. Every interposition of God on the missionary's behalf is then recognised by him as a gift of grace (*χάρισμα*)—not, be it understood, a private favour, but a blessing and a power capacitating him for further service to the Church. Those who have lived through his straits and his triumphs with him in their prayers know how true that is.

At this point (ver. 12) the key in which Paul writes begins to change. We are conscious of a slight discord the instant he speaks about the testimony of his conscience. Yet the transition is as unforced as any such transition can be. I may well take for granted, seems to be the thought in his mind, that you pray for me; I may well ask you to unite with me in thanks to God for my deliverance; for if there is one thing I am sure of, and proud of, it is that I have been a loyal minister of God in the world, and especially to you. Fleshly wisdom has not been my guide. I have used no worldly policy; I have sought no selfish ends. In a holiness and sincerity which God bestows, in an element of crystal transparency, I have led my apostolic life. The world has never convicted me of anything dark or underhand; and in all the world none know better than you, among whom I lived longer than elsewhere, working with my hands, and preaching the Gospel as freely as God offers it, that I have walked in the light as He is in the light.

This general defence, which is not without its note of defiance, becomes defined in ver. 13. Plainly charges of insincerity had been made against Paul, particularly affecting his correspondence, and it is to these he addresses himself. It is not easy to be outspoken and conciliatory in the same sentence, to show your indignation to the man who charges you with double-dealing, and at the same time take him to your heart; and the Apostle's effort to do all these things at once has proved embarrassing to himself, and more than embarrassing to his interpreters. He begins, indeed, lucidly enough. "We write nothing else to you than what you read." He does not mean that he had no correspondence with members of the Church except in his public epistles; but that in these public epistles his meaning was obvious and on the surface. His style was not, as some had hinted, obscure, tortuous, elaborately ambiguous, full of loop-holes; he wrote like a plain man to plain men; he said what he meant, and meant what he said. Then he qualifies this slightly. "We write nothing to you but what you read—or in point of fact acknowledge," even apart from our writing. This seems to me the simplest interpretation of the words ἢ καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε; and the simplest construction is then that of Hofmann, who puts a colon at ἐπιγινώσκετε, and with ἐλπίζω δὲ begins what is virtually a separate sentence. "And I hope that to the end ye will acknowledge, as in fact you acknowledged us in part, that we are your boast, as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus." Other possibilities of punctuation and construction are so numerous that it would be endless to exhibit them; and in the long-run they do not much affect the sense. What the reader has to seize is that Paul has been accused

of insincerity, especially in his correspondence, and that he indignantly denies the charge; that, in spite of such accusations, he can point to at least a partial recognition among the Corinthians of what he and his fellow-workers really are; and that he hopes their confidence in him will increase and continue to the end. Should this bright hope be gratified, then in the day of the Lord Jesus it will be the boast of the Corinthians that they had the great Apostle Paul as their spiritual father, and the boast of the Apostle that the Corinthians were his spiritual children.

A passage like this—and there are many like it in St. Paul—has something in it humiliating. Is it not a disgrace to human nature that a man so open, so truthful, so brave, should be put to his defence on a charge of underhand dealing? Ought not somebody to have been deeply ashamed, for bringing this shame on the Apostle? Let us be very careful how we lend motives, especially to men whom we know to be better than ourselves. There is that in all our hearts which is hostile to them, and would not be grieved to see them degraded a little; and it is that, and nothing else, which supplies bad motives for their good actions, and puts an ambiguous face on their simplest behaviour. "Deceit," says Solomon, "is in the heart of them that imagine evil"; it is our own selves that we condemn most surely when we pass our bad sentence upon others.

The immediate result of imputing motives, and putting a sinister interpretation on actions, is that mutual confidence is destroyed; and mutual confidence is the very element and atmosphere in which any spiritual good can be done. Unless a minister and his congregation recognise each other as in the main

what they profess to be, their relation is destitute of spiritual reality; it may be an infinite weariness, or an infinite torment; it can never be a comfort or a delight on one side or the other. What would a family be, without the mutual confidence of husband and wife, of parents and children? What is a state worth, for any of the ideal ends for which a state exists, if those who represent it to the world have no instinctive sympathy with the general life, and if the collective conscience regards the leaders from a distance with dislike or distrust? And what is the pastoral relation worth, if, instead of mutual cordiality, openness, readiness to believe and to hope the best, instead of mutual intercession and thanksgiving, of mutual rejoicing in each other, there is suspicion, reserve, insinuation, coldness, a grudging recognition of what it is impossible to deny, a willingness to shake the head and to make mischief? What an experience of life we see, what a final appreciation of the best thing, in that utterance of St. John in extreme age: "Beloved, let us love one another." All that is good for us, all glory and joy, is summarily comprehended in that.

The last words of the text—"the day of the Lord Jesus"—recall a very similar passage in 1 Thess. ii. 19: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing—is it not even ye—before our Lord Jesus at His coming?" In both cases our minds are lifted to that great presence in which St. Paul habitually lived; and as we stand there our disagreements sink into their true proportions; our judgments of each other are seen in their true colours. No one will rejoice then that he has made evil out of good, that he has cunningly perverted simple actions, that he has discovered the infirmities of preachers, or set the saints

at variance; the joy will be for those who have loved and trusted each other, who have borne each other's faults and laboured for their healing, who have believed all things, hoped all things, endured all things, rather than be parted from each other by any failure of love. The mutual confidence of Christian ministers and Christian people will then, after all its trials, have its exceeding great reward.

III

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION

"And in this confidence I was minded to come before unto you, that ye might have a second benefit; and by you to pass into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come unto you, and of you to be set forward on my journey unto Judæa. When I therefore was thus minded, did I show fickleness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be the yea yea and the nay nay? But as God is faithful, our word toward you is not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in Him is yea. For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea: wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us."—2 Cor. i. 15-20 (R.V.).

THE emphatic words in the first sentence are "in this confidence." All the Apostle's plans for visiting Corinth, both in general and in their details, depended upon the maintenance of a good understanding between himself and the Church; and the very prominence here given to this condition is a tacit accusation of those whose conduct had destroyed his confidence. When he intimated his intention of visiting them, according to the programme of vv. 15 and 16, he had felt sure of a friendly welcome, and of the cordial recognition of his apostolic authority; it was only when that assurance was taken away from him by news of what was being said and done at Corinth, that he had changed his plan. He had originally

intended to go from Ephesus to Corinth, then from Corinth north into Macedonia, then back to Corinth again, and thence, with the assistance of the Corinthians, or their convoy for part of the way, to Jerusalem. Had this purpose been carried out, he would of course have been twice in Corinth, and it is to this that most scholars refer the words "a second benefit,"[1] or rather "grace." This reference, indeed, is not quite certain; and it cannot be proved, though it is made more probable, by using *πρότερον* and *δευτέραν* to interpret each other. It remains possible that when Paul said, "I was minded to come before unto you, that ye might have a second benefit," he was thinking of his original visit as the first, and of this purposed one as the second, "grace." This reading of his words has commended itself to scholars like Calvin, Bengel, and Heinrici. Whichever of these interpretations be correct, the Apostle had abandoned his purpose of going from Ephesus to Macedonia *viâ* Corinth, and had intimated in the First Epistle (chap. xvi. 5) his intention of reaching Corinth *viâ* Macedonia. This change of purpose is not sufficient to explain what follows. Unless there had been at Corinth a great deal of bad feeling, it would have passed without remark, as a thing which had no doubt good reasons, though the Corinthians were ignorant of them; at the very most, it would have called forth expressions of disappointment and regret. They would have been sorry that the benefit (*χάρις*), the token of Divine favour which was always bestowed when the Apostle

[1] For *χάριν*, (benefit) ℵ^{c}, B, L, P, have *χαράν* (joy.) Though Westcott and Hort put this in the text, and *χάριν* in the margin, most scholars are agreed that *χάριν* is the Apostle's word, and *χαράν* a slip or a correction.

came "in the fulness of the blessing of Christ," and "longing to impart some spiritual gift," had been delayed; but they would have acquiesced as in any other natural disappointment. But this was not what took place. They used the Apostle's change of purpose to assail his character. They charged him with "lightness," with worthless levity. They called him a weathercock, a Yes and No man, who said now one thing and now the opposite, who said both at once and with equal emphasis, who had his own interests in view in his fickleness, and whose word, to speak plainly, could never be depended upon.

The responsibility for the change of plan has already, in the emphatic *ταύτῃ τῇ πεποιθήσει*, been indirectly transferred to his accusers; but the Apostle stoops to answer them quite straightforwardly. His answer is indeed a challenge: "When I cherished that first wish to visit you, *was* I—dare you say I was—guilty of the levity with which you charge me? Or—to enlarge the question, and, seeing that my whole character is attacked, to bring my character as a whole into the discussion—the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be the yea yea and the nay nay?" Am I, he seems to say, in my character and conduct, like a shifty, unprincipled politician—a man who has no convictions, or no conscience about his convictions—a man who is guided, not by any higher spirit dwelling in him, but solely by considerations of selfish interest? Do I say things out of mere compliment, not meaning them? When I make promises, or announce intentions, is it always with the tacit reservation that they may be cancelled if they turn out inconvenient? Do you suppose that I *purposely* represent myself (*ἵνα ᾖ*

παρ' ἐμοί) as a man who affirms and denies, makes promises and breaks them, has Yes yes and No no dwelling side by side in his soul?[1] You know me far better than to suppose any such thing. All my communications with you have been inconsistent with such a view of my character. As God is faithful, our word to you is not Yes and No. It is not incoherent, or equivocal, or self-contradictory. It is entirely truthful and self-consistent.

In this eighteenth verse the Apostle's mind is reaching out already to what he is going to make his real defence, and ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ("our word") therefore carries a double weight. It covers at once whatever he had said to them about the proposed journey, and whatever he had said in his evangelistic ministry at Corinth. It is this latter sense of it that is continued in ver. 19: "For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us, by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not Yes and No, but in him Yes has found place. For how many soever are the promises of God, in Him is the Yes." Let us notice first the argumentative force of this. Paul is engaged in vindicating his character, and especially in maintaining his truthfulness and sincerity. How does he do so here? His unspoken assumption is, that character is determined by the main interest of life; that the work to which a man

[1] Mention may be made here of another interpretation of ver. 17, modifications of which recur from Chrysostom to Hofmann. In substance it is this: "The things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh (*i.e.*, with the stubborn consistency of a proud man, who disposes as well as proposes), that with *me* (ἐμοί emphatic: *me*, as if *I* were God, always to do what I would like to do) the Yes should be yes, and the No, no—*i.e.*, every promise inviolably kept?' This is grammatically quite good, but contextually impossible.

gives his soul will react upon the soul, changing it into its own likeness. As the dyer's hand is subdued to the element it works in, so was the whole being of Paul—such is the argument—subdued to the element in which he wrought, conformed to it, impregnated by it. And what was that element? It was the Gospel concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ. Was there any dubiety about what that was? any equivocal mixture of Yes and No there? Far from it. Paul was so certain of what it was that he repeatedly and solemnly anathematised man or angel who should venture to qualify, let alone deny it. There is no mixture of Yes and No in Christ. As the Apostle says elsewhere (Rom. xv. 8), Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision "*in the interest of the truth of God, with a view to the confirmation of the promises.*" However many the promises might be, in Him a mighty affirmation, a mighty fulfilment, was given of every one. The ministry of the Gospel has this, then, as its very subject, its constant preoccupation, its highest glory—the absolute faithfulness of God. Who would venture to assert that Paul, or that anybody,[1] could catch the trick of equivocation in such a service? Who does not see that such a service must needs create true men?

[1] According to Schmiedel, in the words δι' ἡμῶν . . δι' ἐμοῦ καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου we ought to discover an emphatic reference, by way of contrast, to Judaising opponents of Paul in Corinth. These are said to have brought *another* Jesus (xi. 4), who was *not* God's ἴδιος υἱὸς in Paul's sense (Rom. viii. 32), and in whom there *was* Yea and Nay—namely, the confirmation of the promises to the Jews or those who became Jews to receive them, and the refusal of the promises to the Gentiles as such. It needs a keen scent to discover this, and as the Corinthians read without a commentator it would probably be thrown away upon them.

To this argument there is, for the natural man, a ready answer. It by no means follows, he will say, that because the Gospel is devoid of ambiguity or inconsistency, equivocation and insincerity must be unknown to its preachers. A man may proclaim the true Gospel and in his other dealings be far from a true man. Experience justifies this reply; and yet it does not invalidate Paul's argument. That argument is good for the case in which it is applied. It might be *repeated* by a hypocrite, but no hypocrite could ever have *invented* it. It bears, indeed, a striking because an unintentional testimony to the height at which Paul habitually lived, and to his unqualified identification of himself with his apostolic calling. If a man has ten interests in life, more or less divergent, he may have as many inconsistencies in his behaviour; but if he has said with St. Paul, "This one thing I do," and if the one thing which absorbs his very soul is an unceasing testimony to the truth and faithfulness of God, then it is utterly incredible that he should be a false and faithless man. The work which claims him for its own with this absolute authority will seal him with its own greatness, its own simplicity and truth. He will not use levity. The things which he purposes, he will not purpose according to the flesh. He will not be guided by considerations perpetually varying, except in the point of being all alike selfish. He will not be a Yes and No man, whom nobody can trust.

The argumentative force of the passage being admitted, its doctrinal import deserves attention. The Gospel—which is identified with God's Son, Jesus Christ—is here described as a mighty affirmation. It is not Yes and No, a message full of inconsistencies, or ambiguities, a proclamation the sense of which no one can ever

be sure he has grasped. In it (ἐν αὐτῷ means "in Christ") the everlasting Yea has found place. The perfect tense (γέγονεν) means that this grand affirmation has come to us, and is with us, for good and all. What it was and continued to be in Paul's time, it is to this day. It is in this positive, definite, unmistakable character that the strength of the Gospel lies. What a man cannot know, cannot seize, cannot tell, he cannot preach. The refutation of popular errors, even in theology, is not gospel; the criticism of traditional theories, even about Scripture, is not gospel; the intellectual "economy," with which a clever man in a dubious position uses language about the Bible or its doctrines which to the simple means Yes, and to the subtle qualifies the Yes enormously, is not gospel. There is no strength in any of these things. Dealing in them does not make character simple, sincere, massive, Christian. When they stamp themselves on the soul, the result is not one to which we could make the appeal which Paul makes here. If we have any gospel at all, it is because there are things which stand for us above all doubts, truths so sure that we cannot question them, so absolute that we cannot qualify them, so much our life that to tamper with them is to touch our very heart. Nobody has any right to preach who has not mighty affirmations to make concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ—affirmations in which there is no ambiguity, and which no questioning can reach.

In the Apostle's mind a particular turn is given to this thought by its connexion with the Old Testament. In Christ, he says, the Yes has been realised; for how many soever are the promises of God, in Him is the Yes. The mode of expression is rather peculiar, but the meaning is quite plain. Is there a single word of

good, Paul asks, that God has ever spoken concerning man? Then that word is reaffirmed, it is confirmed, it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It is no longer a word, but an actual gift to men, which they may take hold of and possess. Of course when Paul says "how many soever are the promises," he is thinking of the Old Testament. It was there the promises stood in God's name; and hence he tells us in this passage that Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Testament; in Him God has kept His word given to the fathers. All that the holy men of old were bidden to hope for, as the Spirit spoke through them in many parts and in many ways, is given to the world at last: he who has God's Son, Jesus Christ, has all God has promised, and all He can give.

There are two opposite ways of looking at the Old Testament with which this apostolic teaching is inconsistent, and which, by anticipation, it condemns.

There is the opinion of those who say that God's promises to His people in the Old Testament have not been fulfilled, and never will be. That is the opinion held by many among the modern Jews, who have renounced all that was most characteristic in the religion of their fathers, and attenuated it into the merest deistical film of a creed. It is the opinion also of many who study the Bible as a piece of literary antiquity, but get to no perception of the life which is in it, or of the organic connexion between the Old Testament and the New. What the Apostle says of his countrymen in his own time is true of both these classes—when they read the Scriptures, there is a veil upon their hearts. The Old Testament promises have been fulfilled, every one of them. Let a man be taught what they mean, not as dead letters in an ancient scroll, but

as present words of the living God ; and then let him look to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and see whether there is not in Him the mighty, the perpetual confirmation of them all. We smile sometimes at what seems the whimsical way in which the early Christians, who had not yet a New Testament, found Christ everywhere in the Old ; but though it may be possible to err in detail in this pursuit, it is not possible to err on the whole. The Old Testament is gathered up, every living word of it, in Him ; we are misunderstanding it if we take it otherwise.

The opinion just described is a species of rationalism. There is another opinion, which, while agreeing with the rationalistic one that many of God's promises in the Old Testament have not yet been fulfilled, believes that their fulfilment is still to be awaited. If one might do so without offence, I should call this a species of fanaticism. It is the error of those who take the Jewish nation as such to be the subject of prophecy, and hope for its restoration to Palestine, for a revived Jerusalem, a new Davidic monarchy, even a reign of Christ over such an earthly kingdom. All this, if we may take the Apostle's word for it, is beside the mark. Equally with rationalism it loses the spirit of God's word in the letter. The promises have been fulfilled already, and we are not to look for another fulfilment. Those who have seen Christ have seen all that God is going to do—and it is quite adequate—to make His word good. He who has welcomed Christ knows that not one good word of all that God has spoken has failed. God has never, by the promises of the Old Testament, or by the instincts of human nature, put a hope or a prayer into man's heart that is not answered and satisfied abundantly in His Son.

But leaving the reference to the Old Testament on one side, it is well worth while for us to consider the practical meaning of the truth, that *all* God's promises are Yea in Christ. God's promises are His declarations of what He is willing to do for men; and in the very nature of the case they are at once the inspiration and the limit of our prayers. We are encouraged to ask all that God promises, and we must stop there. Christ Himself then is the measure of prayer to man; we can ask all that is in Him; we dare not ask anything that lies outside of Him. How the consideration of this should expand our prayers in some directions, and contract them in others! We can ask God to give us Christ's purity, Christ's simplicity, Christ's meekness and gentleness, Christ's faithfulness and obedience, Christ's victory over the world. Have we ever measured these things? Have we ever put them into our prayers with any glimmering consciousness of their dimensions, any sense of the vastness of our request? Nay, we can ask Christ's glory, His Resurrection Life of splendour and incorruption—the image of the heavenly. God has promised us all these things, and far more: but has He always promised what we ask? Can we fix our eyes on His Son, as He lived our life in this world, and remembering that this, so far as this world is concerned, is the measure of promise, ask without any qualification that our course here may be free from every trouble? Had Christ no sorrow? Did He never meet with ingratitude? Was He never misunderstood? Was He never hungry, thirsty, weary? If all God's promises are summed up in Him—if He is everything that God has to give—can we go boldly to the throne of grace, and pray to be exempted from what He had to bear, or to be richly

provided with indulgences which He never knew? What if all unanswered prayers might be defined as prayers for things not included in the promises—prayers that we might get what Christ did not get, or be spared what He was not spared? The spirit of this passage, however, does not urge so much the definiteness as the compass and the certainty of the promises of God. They are so many that Paul could never enumerate them, and all of them are sure in Christ. And when our eyes are once opened on Him, does not He Himself become as it were inevitably the substance of our prayers? Is not our whole heart's desire, Oh that I might win *Him*! Oh that *He* might live in me, and make me what He is! Oh that *that* Man might arise in me, that the man I am may cease to be! Do we not feel that if God would give us His Son, all would be ours that we could take or He could give?

It is in this mood—with the consciousness, I mean, that in Jesus Christ the sure promises of God are inconceivably rich and good—that the Apostle adds: "wherefore also through Him is the Amen." It is not easy to put a prayer into words, whether of petition or thanksgiving, for men are not much in the habit of speaking to God; but it is easy to say Amen. That is the part of the Church when God's Son, Jesus Christ, is proclaimed, clothed in His Gospel. Apart from the Gospel, we do not know God, or what He will do, or will not do, for sinful men; but as we listen to the proclamation of His mercy and His faithfulness, as our eyes are opened to see in His Son all He has promised to do for us, nay, in a sense, all He has already done, our grateful hearts break forth in one grand responsive Amen! So let it be! we cry. Unless God had first prompted us by sending His Son, we could never have

found it in our hearts to present such requests to Him; but through Christ we are enabled to present them, though it should be at first with only a look at Him, and an appropriating Amen. It is the very nature of prayer, indeed, to be the answer to promise. Amen is all, at bottom, that God leaves for us to say.

The solemn acceptance of a mercy so great—an acceptance as joyful as it is solemn, since the Amen is one rising out of thankful hearts—redounds to the glory of God. This is the final cause of redemption, and however it may be lost sight of in theologies which make man their centre, it is always magnified in the New Testament. The Apostle rejoices that his ministry and that of his friends (δι' ἡμῶν) contributes to this glory; and the whole connexion of thought in the passage throws a light on a great Bible word. God's glory is identified here with the recognition and appropriation by men of His goodness and faithfulness in Jesus Christ. He is glorified when it dawns on human souls that He has spoken good concerning them beyond their utmost imaginings, and when that good is seen to be indubitably safe and sure in His Son. The Amen in which such souls welcome His mercy is the equivalent of the Old Testament word, "Salvation is of the Lord." It is expanded in an apostolic doxology: "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever."

IV

CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES

"Now He that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave *us* the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."—2 Cor. i. 21, 22 (R.V.).

IT is not easy to show the precise connexion between these words and those which immediately precede. Possibly it is emotional, rather than logical. The Apostle's heart swells as he contemplates in the Gospel the goodness and faithfulness of God; and though his argument is complete when he has exhibited the Gospel in that light, his mind dwells upon it involuntarily, past the mere point of proof; he lingers over the wonderful experience which Christians have of the rich and sure mercies. Those who try to make out a more precise sequence of thought than this are not very successful. Of course it is apparent that the keynote of the passage is in harmony with that of the previous verses. The ideas of "stablishing," of "sealing," and of an "earnest," are all of one family; they are all, as it were, variations of the one mighty *affirmation* which has been made of God's promises in Christ. From this point of view they have an argumentative value. They suggest that God, in all sorts of ways, makes believers as sure of the Gospel, and as constant to it, as He has made it sure and certain

to them; and thus they exclude more decisively than ever the idea that the minister of the Gospel can be a man of Yes and No. But though this is true, it fails to do justice to the word on which the emphasis falls—namely, God. This, according to some interpreters, is done, if we suppose the whole passage to be, in the first instance, a disclaimer of any false inference which might be drawn from the words, "to the glory of God *by us*." "By us," Paul writes; for it was through the apostolic preaching that men were led to receive the Gospel, to look at God's promises, confirmed in Christ, with an appropriating Amen to His glory; but he hastens to add that it was God Himself whose grace in its various workings was the beginning, middle, and end both of their faith and of their preaching. This seems to me rather artificial, and I do not think more than a connexion in sentiment, rather than in argument, can be insisted upon.

But setting this question aside, the interpretation of the two verses is of much interest. They contain some of the most peculiar and characteristic words of the New Testament—words to which, it is to be feared, many readers attach no very distinct idea. The simplest plan is to take the assertions one by one, as if God were the subject. Grammatically this is incorrect, for Θεός is certainly the predicate; but for the elucidation of the meaning this may be disregarded.

(1) First of all, then, God confirms us into Christ. "Us," of course, means St. Paul and the preachers whom he associates with himself,—Silas and Timothy. But when he adds "with you," he includes the Corinthians also, and all believers. He does not claim for himself any stedfastness in Christ, or any trustworthiness as dependent upon it, which he would on

principle refuse to others. God, who makes His promises sure to those who receive them, gives those who receive them a firm grasp of the promises. Christ is here, with all the wealth of grace in Him, indubitable, unmistakable; and what God has done on that side, He does on the other also. He confirms believers into Christ. He makes their attachment to Christ, their possession of Him, a thing indubitable and irreversible. Salvation, to use the words of St. John, is true *in Him and in them*; in them, so far as God's purpose and work go, as much as in Him. He who is confirmed into Christ is in principle as trustworthy, as absolutely to be depended upon, as Christ Himself. The same character of pure truth is common to them both. Christ's existence as the Saviour, in whom all God's promises are guaranteed, and Paul's existence as a saved man with a sure grasp on all these promises, are alike proofs that God is faithful; the truth of God stands behind them both. It is to this that the appeal of vv. 15-20 is virtually made; it is this in the long-run which is called in question when the trustworthiness of Paul is impeached.

All this, it may be said, is ideal; but in what sense is it so? Not in the sense that it is fanciful or unreal; but in the sense that the divine law of our life, and the divine action upon our life, are represented in it. It is our calling as Christian people to be stedfast in Christ. Such stedfastness God is ever seeking to impart, and in striving to attain to it we can always appeal to Him for help. It is the opposite of instability; in a special sense it is the opposite of untrustworthiness. If we are letting God have His way with us in this respect, we are persons who can always be depended upon, and depended upon for conduct in keeping with

the goodness and faithfulness of God, into which we have been confirmed by Him.

(2) From this general truth, with its application to all believers, the Apostle passes to another of more limited range. By including the Corinthians with himself in the first clause, he virtually excludes them in the second—"God anointed us." It is true that the New Testament speaks of an anointing which is common to all believers—"*Ye* have an anointing from the Holy One; ye all know" (1 John ii. 20): but here, on the contrary, something special is meant. This can only be the consecration of Paul, and of those for whom he speaks, to the apostolic or evangelistic ministry. It is worth noticing that in the New Testament the act of anointing is never ascribed to any one but God. The only unction which qualifies for service in the Christian dispensation, or which confers dignity in the Christian community, is the unction from on high. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power," and it is the participation in this great anointing which capacitates any one to work in the Gospel[1] Paul undoubtedly claimed, in virtue of his divine call to apostleship, a peculiar authority in the Church; but we cannot define any peculiarity in his possession of the Spirit. The great gift which must be held in some sense by all Christians—"for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"—was in him intensified, or specialised, for the work he had to do. But it is one Spirit in him and in us, and that is why we do not find the exercise of his authority alien or galling. It is authority divorced

[1] Observe the play on the words in βεβαιῶν εἰς Χριστόν and χρίσας.

from "unction"—authority without this divine qualification—against which the Christian spirit rebels. And though "unction" cannot be defined; though no material guarantee can be given or taken for the possession of the Spirit; though a merely historical succession is, so far as this spiritual competence and dignity are concerned, a mere irrelevance; though, as Vinet said, we think of unction rather when it is absent than when it is present,—still, the thing itself is recognisable enough. It bears witness to itself, as light does; it carries its own authority, its own dignity, with it; it is the *ultima ratio*, the last court of appeal, in the Christian community. It may be that Paul is preparing already, by this reference to his commission, for the bolder assertion of his authority at a later stage.

(3) These two actions of God, however—the establishing of believers in Christ, which goes on continually (*βεβαιῶν*), and the consecration of Paul to the apostleship, which was accomplished once for all (*χρίσας*)—go back to prior actions, in which, again, all believers have an interest. They have a common basis in the great deeds of grace in which the Christian life began. God, he says, is He who also sealed us, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

"He also sealed us." It seems strange that so figurative a word should be used without a hint of explanation, and we must assume that it was so familiar in the Church that the right application could be taken for granted. The middle voice (*σφραγισάμενος*) makes it certain that the main idea is, "He marked us as His own." This is the sense in which the word is frequently used in the Book of Revelation: the servants of God are sealed on their foreheads, that they may be recognised as His. But what is the seal? Under

the Old Testament, the mark which God set upon His people—the covenant sign by which they were identified as His—was circumcision. Under the New Testament, where everything carnal has passed away, and religious materialism is abolished, the sign is no longer in the body; we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. i. 13 f.). But the past tense ("He *sealed* us"), and its recurrence in Eph. i. 13 ("ye *were* sealed"), suggest a very definite reference of this word, and beyond doubt it alludes to baptism. In the New Testament, baptism and the giving of the Holy Spirit are regularly connected with each other. Christians are born of water and of the Spirit. "Repent," is the earliest preaching of the Gospel (Acts ii. 38), "and be baptised every one of you, . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In early Christian writers the use of the word "seal" (*σφραγίς*) as a technical term for baptism is practically universal; and when we combine this practice with the New Testament usage in question, the inference is inevitable. God puts His *seal* upon us, He *marks* us as His own, when we are baptised.[1]

[1] When we consider the New Testament use of this idea (cf. Rom. iv. 11; Rev. vii. 2 ff.; Eph. i. 13 f., and this passage), and remember that Paul and John can have had nothing to do with the Greek mysteries, it will be apparent that to adduce the ecclesiastical use of *σφραγίς* as a proof that the conceptions current in these mysteries had a powerful influence from the earliest times on the Christian conception of baptism is beside the mark. One of the earliest examples outside the New Testament is in the Shepherd of Hermas, *Simil.*, viii. 6: *οἱ πιστεύσαντες καὶ εἰληφότες τὴν σφραγῖδα καὶ τεθλακότες αὐτὴν καὶ μὴ τηρήσαντες ὑγιῆ.* This figure of *breaking the seal*, by falling into sin and losing what baptism confers, is common. Sometimes it is varied: "Keep the flesh pure, *καὶ τὴν σφραγῖδα ἄσπιλον*," in 2 Clem. viii. 6. This may be made to carry superstition, but there is nothing superstitious or unscriptural in it to begin with.

But the seal is not baptism as a ceremonial act. It is neither immersion nor sprinkling nor any other mode of lustration which marks us out as God's. The seal by which "the Lord knoweth them that are His" is His Spirit; it is the impress of His Spirit upon them. When that impress can be traced upon our souls, by Him, or by us, or by others, then we have the witness in ourselves; the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God.

But of all words "spirit" is the vaguest; and if we had nothing but the word itself to guide us, we should either lapse into superstitious ideas about the virtue of the sacrament, or into fanatical ideas about incommunicable inward experiences in which God marked us for His own. The New Testament provides us with a more excellent way than either; it gives the word "spirit" a rich but definite moral content; it compels us, if we say we have been sealed with the Spirit, and claimed by God as His, to exhibit the distinguishing features of those who are His. "The Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 17). To be sealed with the Spirit is to bear, in however imperfect a degree, in however inconspicuous a style, the image of the heavenly man, the likeness of Jesus Christ. There are many passages in his Epistles in which St. Paul enlarges on the work of the Spirit in the soul; all the various dispositions which it creates, all the fruits of the Spirit, may be conceived as different parts of the impression made by the seal. We must think of these in detail, if we wish to give the word its meaning; we must think of them in contrast with the unspiritual nature, if we wish to give it any edge. Once, say, we walked in the lusts of the flesh: has Christ redeemed us, and set on our souls and our bodies the seal of His purity? Once

we were hot and passionate, given to angry words and hasty, intemperate deeds: are we sealed now with the meekness and gentleness of Jesus? Once we were grasping and covetous, even to the verge of dishonesty; we could not let money pass us, and we could not part with it: have we been sealed with the liberality of Him who says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"? Once a wrong rankled in our hearts; the sun went down upon our wrath, not once or twice, but a thousand times, and found it as implacable as ever: is that deep brand of vindictiveness effaced now, and in its stead imprinted deep the Cross of Christ, where He loved us, and gave Himself for us, and prayed, "Father, forgive them"? Once our conversation was corrupt; it had a taint in it; it startled and betrayed the innocent; it was vile and foolish and unseemly: are these things of the past now? and has Christ set upon our lips the seal of His own grace and truth, of His own purity and love, so that every word we speak is good, and brings blessing to those who hear us? These things, and such as these, are the seal of the Spirit. They are Christ in us. They are the stamp which God sets upon men when He exhibits them as His own.

The seal, however, has another use than that of marking and identifying property. It is a symbol of assurance. It is the answer to a challenge. It is in this sense that it is easiest to apply the figure to baptism. Baptism does not, indeed, carry with it the actual possession of all these spiritual features; it is not even, as an *opus operatum*, the implanting of them in the soul; but it is a divine pledge that they are within our reach; we can appeal to it as an assurance that God has come to us in His grace, has claimed us

as His own, and is willing to conform us to the image of His Son. In this sense, it is legitimate and natural to call it God's seal upon His people.

(4) Side by side with "He sealed us," the Apostle writes, "He gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." After what has been said, it is obvious that this is another aspect of the same thing. We are sealed with the Spirit, and we get the earnest of the Spirit. In other words, the Spirit is viewed in two characters: first, as a seal; and then as an earnest. This last word has a very ancient history. It is found in the Book of Genesis (xxxviii. 18: עֵרָבוֹן), and was carried, no doubt, by Phœnician traders, who had much occasion to use it, both to Greece and Italy. From the classical peoples it has come more or less directly to us. It means properly a small sum of money paid to clench a bargain, or to ratify an engagement. Where there is an earnest, there is more to follow, and more of essentially the same kind—that is what it signifies. Let us apply this now to the expression of St. Paul, "the earnest of the Spirit." It means, we must see, that in the gift of this Spirit, in that measure in which we now possess it, God has not given all He has to give. On the contrary, He has come under an obligation to give more: what we have now is but "the firstfruits of the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 23). It is an indication and a pledge of what is yet to be, but bears no proportion to it. All we can say on the basis of this text is, that between the present and the future gift—between the earnest and that which it guarantees—there must be some kind of congruity, some affinity which makes the one a natural and not an arbitrary reason for believing in the other.

But the Corinthians were not limited to this text.

They had St. Paul's general teaching in their minds to interpret it by; and if we wish to know what it meant even for them, we must fill out this vague idea with what the Apostle tells us elsewhere. Thus in the great text in Ephesians (i. 13 f.), so often referred to, he speaks of the Holy Spirit with which we were sealed as the earnest *of our inheritance.* God has an "inheritance" in store for us. His Spirit makes us sons; and if sons, then heirs; heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. This connexion of the Spirit, sonship, and inheritance, is constant in St. Paul; it is one of his most characteristic combinations. What then *is* the inheritance of which the Spirit is the earnest? That no one can tell. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him." But though we cannot tell more precisely, we can say that if the Spirit is the earnest of it, it must be in some sense a development of the Spirit; life in an order of being which matches the Spirit, and for which the Spirit qualifies. If we say it is "glory," then we must remember that only Christ in us (the seal of the Spirit) can be *the hope* of glory.

The application of this can be made very plain. Our whole life in this world looks to some future, however near or bounded it may be; and every power we perfect, every capacity we acquire, every disposition and spirit we foster, is an earnest of something in that future. Here is a man who gives himself to the mastery of a trade. He acquires all its skill, all its methods, all its resources. There is nothing any tradesman can do that he cannot do as well or better. What is that the earnest of? What does it ensure, and as it were put into his hand by anticipation? It is the earnest

of constant employment, of good wages, of respect from fellow-workmen, perhaps of wealth. Here, again, is a man with the scientific spirit. He is keenly inquisitive about the facts and laws of the world in which we live. Everything is interesting to him—astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, history. What is this the earnest of? It is the earnest, probably, of scientific achievements of some kind, of intellectual toils and intellectual victories. This man will enter into the inheritance of science; he will walk through the kingdoms of knowledge in the length of them and the breadth of them, and will claim them as his own. And so it is wherever we choose to take our illustrations. Every spirit that dwells in us, and is cultivated and cherished by us, is an *earnest*, because it fits and furnishes us for some particular thing. *God's* Spirit also is an earnest of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, imperishable: can we assure ourselves that we have anything in our souls which promises, because it matches with, an inheritance like this? When we come to die, this will be a serious question. The faculties of accumulation, of mechanical skill, of scientific research, of trade on a great or a small scale, of agreeable social intercourse, of comfortable domestic life, may have been brought to perfection in us; but can we console ourselves with the thought that *these* have the earnest of immortality? Do they qualify us for, and by qualifying assure us of, the incorruptible kingdom? Or do we not see at once that a totally different equipment is needed to make men at home there, and that nothing can be the earnest of an eternal life of blessedness with God except that Holy Spirit with which He seals His own, and through which He makes them, even here, partakers of the divine nature?

We cannot study these words without becoming conscious of the immense enlargement which the Christian religion has brought to the human mind, of the vast expansion of hope which is due to the Gospel, and at the same time of the moral soundness and sobriety with which that hope is conceived. The promises of God were first really apprehended in Jesus Christ; in Him as He lived and died and rose again from the dead, in Him especially as He lives in immortal glory, men first saw what God was able and willing to do for them, and they saw this in its true relations. They saw it under its moral and spiritual conditions. It was not a future unconnected with the present, or connected with it in an arbitrary or incalculable way. It was a future which had its earnest in the present, a guarantee not alien to it, but akin—the Spirit of Christ implanted in the heart, the likeness of Christ sealed upon the nature. The glorious inheritance was the inheritance, not of strangers, but of sons; and it still becomes sure as the Spirit of sonship is received, and fades into incredibility when that Spirit is extinguished or depressed. If we could live in the Spirit with the completeness of Christ, or even of St. Paul, we should feel that we really had an earnest of immortality; the glory of heaven would be as certain to us as the faithfulness of God to His promise.

V

A PASTOR'S HEART

"But I call God for a witness upon my soul, that to spare you I forbare to come unto Corinth. Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. But I determined this for myself, that I would not come again to you with sorrow. For if I make you sorry, who then is he that maketh me glad, but he that is made sorry by me? And I wrote this very thing, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you."—2 Cor. i. 23-ii. 4 (R.V.).

WHEN Paul came to the end of the paragraph in which he defends himself from the charge of levity and untrustworthiness by appealing to the nature of the Gospel which he preached, he seems to have felt that it was hardly sufficient for his purpose. It might be perfectly true that the Gospel was one mighty affirmation, with no dubiety or inconsistency about it; it might be as true that it was a supreme testimony to the faithfulness of God; but bad men, or suspicious men, would not admit that its character covered his. Their own insincerities would keep them from understanding its power to change its loyal ministers into its own likeness, and to stamp them with its own simplicity and truth. The mere invention of the argument in vv. 18-20 is of itself the highest possible

testimony to the ideal height at which the Apostle lived; no man conscious of duplicity could ever have had it occur to him. But it had the defect of being too good for his purpose; the foolish and the false could see a triumphant reply to it; and he leaves it for a solemn asseveration of the reason which actually kept him from carrying out his first intention. "I call God to witness against my soul, that sparing you I forbore to come[1] to Corinth." The soul is the seat of life; he stakes his life, as it were, in God's sight, upon the truth of his words. It was not consideration for himself, in any selfish spirit, but consideration for them, which explained his change of purpose. If he had carried out his intention, and gone to Corinth, he would have had to do so, as he says in 1 Cor. iv. 21, with a rod, and this would not have been pleasant either for him or for them.

This is very plain—plain even to the dullest; the Apostle has no sooner set it down than he feels it is too plain. "To spare us," he hears the Corinthians say to themselves as they read: "who is he that he should take this tone in speaking to us?" And so he hastens to anticipate and deprecate their touchy criticism: "Not that we lord it over your faith, but we are helpers of your joy; as far as faith is concerned, your position, of course, is secure."

This is a very interesting aside; the digressions in St. Paul, as in Plato, are sometimes more attractive than the arguments. It shows us, for one thing, the freedom of the Christian faith. Those who have

[1] The R.V. "forbare to come" has the same vagueness as οὐκέτι ἦλθον, which may mean (1) "I came not as yet"—so A.V.; or (2) "I came not again"; or (3) "I came no more."

received the Gospel have all the responsibilities of mature men; they have come to their majority as spiritual beings; they are not, in their character and standing as Christians, subject to arbitrary and irresponsible interference on the part of others. Paul himself was the great preacher of this spiritual emancipation: he gloried in the liberty with which Christ made men free. For him the days of bondage were over; there was no subjection for the Christian to any custom or tradition of men, no enslavement of his conscience to the judgment or the will of others, no coercion of the spirit except by itself. He had great confidence in this Gospel and in its power to produce generous and beautiful characters. That it was capable of perversion also he knew very well. It was open to the infusion of self-will; in the intoxication of freedom from arbitrary and unspiritual restraint, men might forget that the believer was bound to be a law to himself, that he was free, not in lawless self-will, but only in the Lord. Nevertheless, the principle of freedom was too sacred to be tampered with; it was necessary both for the education of the conscience and for the enrichment of spiritual life with the most various and independent types of goodness; and the Apostle took all the risks, and all the inconveniences even, rather than limit it in the least.

This passage shows us one of the inconveniences. The newly enfranchised are mightily sensible of their freedom, and it is extremely difficult to tell them of their faults. At the very mention of authority all that is bad in them, as well as all that is good, is on the alert; and spiritual independence and the liberty of the Christian people have been represented and defended again and again, not only by an awful sense of respon-

sibility to Christ, which lifts the lowliest lives into supreme greatness, but by pride, bigotry, moral insolence, and every bad passion. What is to be done in such cases as these, where liberty has forgotten the law of Christ? It is certainly not to be denied in principle: Paul, even with the peculiar position of an apostle, and of the spiritual father of those to whom he writes (1 Cor. iv. 15), does not claim such an authority over their faith—that is, over the people themselves in their character of believers—as a master has over his slaves. Their position as Christians is secure; it is taken for granted by him as by them; and this being so, no arbitrary *ipse dixit* can settle anything in dispute between them; he can issue no orders to the Church such as the Roman Emperor could issue to his soldiers. He may appeal to them on spiritual grounds; he may enlighten their consciences by interpreting to them the law of Christ; he may try to reach them by praise or blame; but simple compulsion is not one of his resources. If St. Paul says this, occupying as he does a position which contains in itself a natural authority which most ministers can never have, ought not all official persons and classes in the Church to beware of the claims they make for themselves? A clerical hierarchy, such as has been developed and perfected in the Church of Rome, does lord it over faith; it *legislates* for the laity, both in faith and practice, without their co-operation, or even their consent; it keeps the *cœtus fidelium*, the mass of believing men, which *is* the Church, in a perpetual minority. All this, in a so-called apostolic succession, is not only anti-apostolic, but anti-Christian. It is the confiscation of Christian freedom; the keeping of believers in leading-strings all their days, lest in their liberty they should go astray. In the Protestant

Churches, on the other hand, the danger on the whole is of the opposite kind. We are too jealous of authority. We are too proud of our own competence. We are too unwilling, individually, to be taught and corrected. We resent, I will not say criticism, but the most serious and loving voice which speaks to us to disapprove. Now liberty, when it does not deepen the sense of responsibility to God and to the brotherhood —and it does not always do so—is an anarchic and disintegrating force. In all the Churches it exists, to some extent, in this degraded form; and it is this which makes Christian education difficult, and Church discipline often impossible. These are serious evils, and we can only overcome them if we cultivate the sense of responsibility at the same time that we maintain the principle of liberty, remembering that it is those only of whom he says, "Ye were bought with a price" (and are therefore Christ's slaves), to whom St. Paul also gives the charge: "Be not ye slaves of men."

This passage not only illustrates the freedom of Christian faith, it presents us with an ideal of the Christian ministry. "We are not lords over your faith," says St. Paul, "but we are helpers of your joy." It is implied in this that joy is the very end and element of the Christian life, and that it is the minister's duty to be at war with all that restrains it, and to co-operate in all that leads to it. Here, one would say, is something in which all can agree: all human souls long for joy, however much they may differ about the spheres of law and liberty. But have not most Christian people, and most Christian congregations, something here to accuse themselves of? Do not many of us bear false witness against the Gospel on this very point? Who that came into most churches, and looked

at the uninterested faces, and hearkened to the listless singing, would feel that the soul of the religion, so languidly honoured, was mere joy—joy unspeakable, if we trust the Apostles, and full of glory? It is ingratitude which makes us forget this. We begin to grow blind to the great things which lie at the basis of our faith; the love of God in Jesus Christ—that love in which He died for us upon the tree—begins to lose its newness and its wonder; we speak of it without apprehension and without feeling; it does not make our hearts burn within us any more; we have no joy in it. Yet we may be sure of this—that we can have no joy without it. And he is our best friend, the truest minister of God to us, who helps us to the place where the love of God is poured out in our hearts in its omnipotence, and we renew our joy in it. In doing so, it may be necessary for the minister to cause pain by the way. There is no joy, nor any possibility of it, where evil is tolerated. There is no joy where sin has been taken under the patronage of those who call themselves by Christ's name. There is no joy where pride is in arms in the soul, and is reinforced by suspicion, by obstinacy, even by jealousy and hate, all waiting to dispute the authority of the preacher of repentance. When these evil spirits are overcome, and cast out, which may only be after a painful conflict, joy will have its opportunity again,—joy, whose right it is to reign in the Christian soul and the Christian community. Of all evangelistic forces, this joy is the most potent; and for that, above all other reasons, it should be cherished wherever Christian people wish to work the work of their Lord.

After this little digression on the freedom of the faith, and on joy as the element of the Christian life,

Paul returns to his defence. "To spare you I forbore to come; for I made up my own mind on this, not to come to you a second time in sorrow." Why was he so determined about this? He explains in the second verse. It is because all his joy is bound up in the Corinthians, so that if he grieves them he has no one left to gladden him except those whom he has grieved—in other words, he has no joy at all. And he not only made up his mind definitely on this; he wrote also in exactly this sense: he did not wish, when he came, to have sorrow from those from whom he ought to have joy. In that desire to spare himself, as well as them, he counted on their sympathy; he was sure that his own joy was the joy of every one of them, and that they would appreciate his motives in not fulfilling a promise, the fulfilment of which in the circumstances would only have brought grief both to them and him. The delay has given them time to put right what was amiss in their Church, and has ensured a joyful time to them all when his visit is actually accomplished.

There are some grammatical and historical difficulties here which claim attention. The most discussed is that of the first verse: what is the precise meaning of *τὸ μὴ πάλιν ἐν λύπῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλθεῖν*? There is no doubt that this is the correct order of the words, and just as little, I think, that the natural meaning is that Paul had once visited Corinth in grief, and was resolved not to repeat such a visit. So the words are taken by Meyer, Hofmann, Schmiedel, and others. The visit in question cannot have been that on occasion of which the Church was founded; and as the connexion between this passage and the last chapter of the First Epistle is as close as can be conceived (see

the Introduction), it cannot have fallen between the two: the only other supposition is, that it took place before the First Epistle was written. This is the opinion of Lightfoot, Meyer, and Weiss; and it is not fatal to it that no such visit is mentioned elsewhere—*e.g.*, in the book of Acts. Still, the interpretation is not essential; and if we can get over chap. xiii. 2, it is quite possible to agree with Heinrici that Paul had only been in Corinth once, and that what he means in ver. 1 here is: "I determined not to carry out my purpose of revisiting you, in sorrow."

There is a difficulty of another sort in ver. 2. One's first thought is to read *καὶ τίς ὁ εὐφραίνων με κ.τ.λ.*, as a real singular, with a reference, intelligible though indefinite, to the notorious but penitent sinner of Corinth. "I vex you, I grant it; but where does my joy come from—the joy without which I am resolved not to visit you—except from one who is vexed by me?" The bad man's repentance had made Paul glad, and there is a worthy considerateness in this indefinite way of designating him. This interpretation has commended itself to so sound a judge as Bengel, and though more recent scholars reject it with practical unanimity, it is difficult to be sure that it is wrong. The alternative is to generalise the *τίς*, and make the question mean: "If I vex you, where can I find joy? All my joy is in you, and to see you grieved leaves me absolutely joyless."

A third difficulty is the reference of *ἔγραψα τοῦτο αὐτὸ* in ver. 3. Language very similar is found in ver. 9 (*εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἔγραψα*), and again in chap. vii. 8-12 (*ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ*). It is very natural to think here of our First Epistle. It served the purpose contemplated by the letter here described;

it told of Paul's change of purpose; it warned the Corinthians to rectify what was amiss, and so to order their affairs that he might come, not with a rod, but in love and in the spirit of meekness; or, as he says here, not to have sorrow, but, what he was entitled to, joy from his visit. All that is alleged against this is that our First Epistle does not suit the description given of the writing in ver. 4: "out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears." But when those parts of the First Epistle are read, in which St. Paul is not answering questions submitted to him by the Church, but writing out of his heart upon its spiritual condition, this will appear a dubious assertion. What a pain must have been at his heart, when such passionate words broke from him as these: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?—What is Apollos, and what is Paul?—With me it is a very little thing to be judged by you.—Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I begot you through the Gospel.—I will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power." Not to speak of the fifth and sixth chapters, words like these justify us in supposing that the First Epistle may be, and in all probability is, meant.[1]

Putting these details aside, as of mainly historical interest, let us look rather at the spirit of this passage. It reveals, more clearly perhaps than any passage in

[1] To suppose the reference to be to an epistle carried by Titus and now lost, is to suppose what is incapable of proof or disproof. To take ἔγραψα as "epistolary" aorist, and translate "I write," is grammatically, but only grammatically, possible. The supposed reference to chaps. x. 1—xiii. 10 as a separate epistle is noticed in the Introduction.

the New Testament, the essential qualification of the Christian minister—a heart pledged to his brethren in the love of Christ. That is the only possible basis of an authority which can plead its own and its Master's cause against the aberrations of spiritual liberty, and there is always both room and need for it in the Church. Certainly it is the hardest of all authorities to win, and the costliest to maintain, and therefore substitutes for it are innumerable. The poorest are those that are merely official, where a minister appeals to his standing as a member of a separate order, and expects men to reverence that. If this was once possible in Christendom, if it is still possible where men secretly wish to shunt their spiritual responsibilities upon others, it is not possible where emancipation has been grasped either in an anarchic or in a Christian spirit. Let the great idea of liberty, and of all that is cognate with liberty, once dawn upon their souls, and men will never sink again to the recognition of anything as an authority that does not attest itself in a purely spiritual way. "Orders" will mean nothing to them but an arrogant unreality, which in the name of all that is free and Christian they are bound to contemn. It will be the same, too, with any authority which has merely an intellectual basis. A professional education, even in theology, gives no man authority to meddle with another in his character as a Christian. The University and the Divinity Schools can confer no competence here. Nothing that distinguishes a man from his fellows, nothing in virtue of which he takes a place of superiority apart: on the contrary, that love only which makes him entirely one with them in Jesus Christ, can ever entitle him to interpose. If their joy is his joy; if to grieve them, even for their good, is his

grief; if the cloud and sunshine of their lives cast their darkness and their light immediately upon him; if he shrinks from the faintest approach to self-assertion, yet would sacrifice anything to perfect their joy in the Lord,—then he is in the true apostolical succession; and whatever authority may rightly be exercised, where the freedom of the spirit is the law, may rightly be exercised by him. What is required of Christian workers in every degree—of ministers and teachers, of parents and friends, of all Christian people with the cause of Christ at heart—is a greater expenditure of soul on their work. Here is a whole paragraph of St. Paul, made up almost entirely of "grief" and "joy"; what depth of feeling lies behind it! If this is alien to us in our work for Christ, we need not wonder that our work does not tell.

And if this is true generally, it is especially true when the work we have to do is that of rebuking sin. There are few things which try men, and show what spirit they are of, more searchingly than this. We like to be on God's side, and to show our zeal for Him, and we are far too ready to put all our bad passions at His service. But these are a gift which He declines. Our wrath does not work His righteousness—a lesson that even good men, of a kind, are very slow to learn. To denounce sin, and to declaim about it, is the easiest and cheapest thing in the world: one could not do less where sin is concerned, unless he did nothing at all. Yet how common denunciation is. It seems almost to be taken for granted as the natural and praiseworthy mode of dealing with evil. People assail the faults of the community, or even of their brethren in the Church, with violence, with temper, with the tone, often, of injured innocence. They think that when they do so

they are doing God service; but surely we should have learned by this time that nothing could be so unlike God, so unfaithful and preposterous as a testimony for Him. God Himself overcomes evil with good; Christ vanquishes the sin of the world by taking the burden of it on Himself; and if we wish to have part in the same work, there is only the same method open to us. Depend upon it, we shall not make others weep for that for which we have not wept; we shall not make that touch the hearts of others which has not first touched our own. That is the law which God has established in the world; He submitted to it Himself in the person of His Son, and He requires us to submit to it. Paul was certainly a very fiery man; he could explode, or flame up, with far more effect than most people; yet it was not there that his great strength lay. It was in the passionate tenderness that checked that vehement temper, and made the once haughty spirit say what he says here: "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears, not that you might be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have more abundantly toward you." In words like these the very spirit speaks which is God's power to subdue and save the sinful.

It is worth dwelling upon this, because it is so fundamental, and yet so slowly learned. Even Christian ministers, who ought to know the mind of Christ, almost universally, at least in the beginning of their work, when they preach about evil, lapse into the scolding tone. It is of no use whatever in the pulpit, and of just as little in the Sunday-school class, in the home, or in any relation in which we seek to exercise moral authority. The one basis for that authority is

love; and the characteristic of love in the presence of evil is not that it becomes angry, or insolent, or disdainful, but that it takes the burden and the shame of the evil to itself. The hard, proud heart is impotent; the mere official is impotent, whether he call himself priest or pastor; all hope and help lie in those who have learned of the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world. It is soul-travail like His, attesting love like His, that wins all the victories in which He can rejoice.

VI

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

"But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow, not to me, but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all. Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was *inflicted* by the many; so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you to confirm *your* love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things. But to whom ye forgive anything, I *forgive* also: for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes *have I forgiven it* in the person of Christ; that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices."—2 Cor. ii. 5-11 (R.V.).

THE foregoing paragraph of the Epistle has said a great deal about sorrow, the sorrow felt by St. Paul on the one hand, and the sorrow he was reluctant to cause the Corinthians on the other. In the passage before us reference is evidently made to the person who was ultimately responsible for all this trouble. If much in it is indefinite to us, and only leaves a doubtful impression, it was clear enough for those to whom it was originally addressed; and that very indefiniteness has its lesson. There are some things to which it is sufficient, and more than sufficient, to allude; least said is best said. And even when plain-speaking has been indispensable, a stage arrives at which there is no more to be gained by it; if the subject *must* be referred to, the utmost generality of

reference is best. Here the Apostle discusses the case of a person who had done something extremely bad; but with the sinner's repentance assured, it is both characteristic and worthy of him that neither here nor in chap. vii. does he mention the name either of offender or offence. It is perhaps too much to expect students of his writings, who wish to trace out in detail all the events of his life, and to give the utmost possible definiteness to all its situations, to be content with this obscurity; but students of his spirit—Christian people reading the Bible for practical profit—do not need to perplex themselves as to this penitent man's identity. He may have been the person mentioned in 1 Cor. v. who had married his stepmother; he may have been some one who had been guilty of a personal insult to the Apostle: the main point is that he was a sinner whom the discipline of the Church had saved.[1]

The Apostle had been expressing himself about his sorrow with great vehemence, and he is careful in his very first words to make it plain that the offence which had caused such sorrow was no personal matter. It concerned the Church as well as him. "If any one hath caused sorrow, he hath not caused sorrow to me, but in part to you all." To say more than this would be to exaggerate (*ἐπιβαρεῖν*).[2] The Church, in point of fact, had not been moved either as universally or as

[1] On the identity of the person referred to, see Introduction, p. 2 f.

[2] This meaning of *ἐπιβαρεῖν*, taken as intransitive, is rather vague, but I believe substantially correct. If the word is to be taken as virtually transitive, the object must be the partisans of the offender. It would "bear hardly" on them, to assume that *they* had been grieved by what Paul considered an offence. They had not been grieved. That is why he excludes them from *πάντας ὑμᾶς* by *ἀπὸ μέρους*.

profoundly as it should have been by the offence of this wicked man. The penalty imposed upon him, whatever it may have been, had not been imposed by a unanimous vote, but only by a majority; there were some who sympathised with him, and would have been less severe.[1] Still, it had brought conviction of his sin to the offender; he could not brazen it out against such consenting condemnation as there was; he was overwhelmed with penitential grief. This is why the Apostle says, "Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority." It has served the purpose of all disciplinary treatment; and having done so, must now be superseded by an opposite line of action. "Contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow." In St. Paul's sentence "such a one" comes last, with the emphasis of compassion upon it. He had been "such a one," to begin with, as it was a pain and a shame even to think about; he is "such a one," now, as the angels in heaven are rejoicing over; "such a one" as the Apostle, having the spirit of Him who received sinners, regards with profoundest pity and yearning; "such a one" as the Church ought to meet with pardoning and restoring love, lest grief sink into despair, and the sinner cut himself off from hope. To prevent such a deplorable result, the Corinthians are by some formal action (κυρῶσαι: cf. Gal. iii. 15)

[1] This suits with either idea as to the identity of the man. (1) If he were the incestuous person of 1 Cor. v., the minority would consist of those who abused the Christian idea of liberty, and were "puffed up" (1 Cor. v. 2) over this sin as an illustration of it. (2) If he were one who had personally insulted Paul, the minority would probably consist of the Judaistic opponents of the Apostle.

to forgive him, and receive him again as a brother; and in their forgiveness and welcome he is to find the pledge of the great love of God.

This whole passage is of interest from the light which it throws upon the discipline of the Church; or, to use less technical and more correct language, the Christian treatment of the erring.

It shows us, for one thing, the aim of all discipline: it is, in the last resort, the restoration of the fallen. The Church has, of course, an interest of its own to guard; it is bound to protest against all that is inconsistent with its character; it is bound to expel scandals. But the Church's protest, its condemnation, its excommunication even, are not ends in themselves; they are means to that which is really an end in itself, a priceless good which justifies every extreme of moral severity, the winning again of the sinner through repentance. The judgment of the Church is the instrument of God's love, and the moment it is accepted in the sinful soul it begins to work as a redemptive force. The humiliation it inflicts is that which God exalts; the sorrow, that which He comforts. But when a scandal comes to light in a Christian congregation—when one of its members is discovered in a fault gross, palpable, and offensive—what is the significance of that movement of feeling which inevitably takes place? In how many has it the character of goodness and of severity, of condemnation and of compassion, of love and fear, of pity and shame, the only character that has any virtue in it to tell for the sinner's recovery? If you ask nine people out of ten what a scandal is, they will tell you it is something which makes talk; and the talk in nine cases out of ten will be malignant, affected, more interesting to the talkers than any story

of virtue or piety—scandal itself, in short, far more truly than its theme. Does anybody imagine that gossip is one of the forces that waken conscience, and work for the redemption of our fallen brethren? If this is all we can do, in the name of all that is Christian let us keep silence. Every word spoken about a brother's sin, that is not prompted by a Christian conscience, that does not vibrate with the love of a Christian heart, is itself a sin against the mercy and the judgment of Christ.

We see here not only the end of Church discipline, but the force of which it disposes for the attainment of its end. That force is neither more nor less than the conscience of the Christian people who constitute the Church: discipline is, in principle, the reaction of that force against all immorality. In special cases, forms may be necessary for its exercise, and in the forms in which it is exercised variations may be found expedient, according to time, place, or degree of moral progress; the congregation as a body, or a representative committee of it, or its ordained ministers, may be its most suitable executors; but that on which all alike have to depend for making their proceedings effective to any Christian intent is the vigour of Christian conscience, and the intensity of Christian love, in the community as a whole. Where these are wanting, or exist only in an insignificant degree, disciplinary proceedings are reduced to a mere form; they are legal, not evangelical; and to be legal in such matters is not only hypocritical, but insolent. Instead of rendering a real Christian service to offenders, which by awakening conscience will lead to penitence and restoration, discipline under such conditions is equally cruel and unjust.

It is plain also, from the nature of the force which it employs, that discipline is a function of the Church which is in incessant exercise, and is not called into action only on special occasions. To limit it to what are technically known as cases of discipline—the formal treatment of offenders by a Church court, or by any person or persons acting in an official character—is to ignore its real nature, and to give its exercise in these cases a significance to which it has no claim. The offences against the Christian standard which can be legally impeached even in Church courts are not one in ten thousand of those against which the Christian conscience ought energetically to protest; and it is the vigour with which the ceaseless reaction against evil in every shape is instinctively maintained which measures the effectiveness of all formal proceedings, and makes them means of grace to the guilty. The officals of a Church may deal in their official place with offences against soberness, purity, or honesty; they are bound to deal with them, whether they like it or not; but their success will depend upon the completeness with which they, and those whom they represent, have renounced not only the vices which they are judging, but all that is out of keeping with the mind and spirit of Christ. The drunkard, the sensualist, the thief, know perfectly well that drunkenness, sensuality, and theft are not the only sins which mar the soul. They know that there are other vices, just as real if not so glaring, which are equally fatal to the life of Christ in man, and as completely disqualify men for acting in Christ's name. They are conscious that it is not a *bona fide* transaction when their sins are impeached by men whose consciences endure with equanimity the reign of meanness, duplicity, pride, hypocrisy, self-

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complacency. They are aware that God is not present where these are dominant, and that God's power to judge and save can never come through such channels. Hence the exercise of discipline in these legal forms is often resented, and often ineffective; and instead of complaining about what is obviously inevitable, the one thing at which all should aim who wish to protect the Church from scandals is to cultivate the common conscience, and bring it to such a degree of purity and vigour, that its spontaneous resentment of evil will enable the Church practically to dispense with legal forms. This Christian community at Corinth had a thousand faults; in many points we are tempted to find in it rather a warning than an example; but I think we may take this as a signal proof that it was really sound at heart: its condemnation of this guilty man fell upon his conscience as the sentence of God, and brought him in tears to the feet of Christ. No legal proceedings could have done that: nothing could have done it but a real and passionate sympathy with the holiness and the love of Christ. Such sympathy is the one subduing, reconciling, redeeming power in our hands; and Paul might well rejoice, after all his affliction and anguish of heart, when he found it so unmistakably at work in Corinth. Not so much formal as instinctive, though not shrinking on occasion from formal proceedings; not malignant, yet closing itself inexorably against evil; not indulgent to badness, but with goodness like Christ's, waiting to be gracious,—this Christian virtue really holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and opens and shuts with the authority of Christ Himself. We need it in all our Churches to-day, as much as it was needed in Corinth; we need it that special acts of discipline may be effective; we need it

still more that they may be unnecessary. Pray for it as for a gift that comprehends every other—the power to represent Christ, and work His work, in the recovery and restoration of the fallen.

In vv. 9-11, the same subject is continued, but with a slightly different aspect exposed. Paul had obviously taken the initiative in this matter, though the bulk of the Church, at his prompting, had acted in a right spirit. Their conduct was in harmony with his motive in writing to them,[1] which had really been to make proof of their obedience in all points. But he has already disclaimed either the right or the wish to lord it over them in their liberty as believers; and here, again, he represents himself rather as following them in their treatment of the offender, than as pointing out the way. "Now to whom ye forgive anything, I also forgive"—so great is my confidence in you: "for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I forgiven it in the presence of Christ." When he says "if I *have* forgiven anything," he does not mean that his forgiveness is dubious, or in suspense; what he does is to deprecate the thought that his forgiveness is the main thing, or that he had been the person principally offended. When he says "*for your sakes* have I forgiven it," the words are explained by what follows: to have refused his forgiveness in the circumstances would have been to perpetuate a state of matters which could only have injured the Church. When he adds that his forgiveness is bestowed "in the presence of Christ," he gives the assurance that it is no complaisance or formality, but a real acceptance of the

[1] This is the force of the καὶ before ἔγραψα in ver. 9.

offender to peace and friendship again.[1] And we should not overlook the fact that in this association of Christ, of the Corinthians, and of himself, in the work of forgiveness and restoration, Paul is really encompassing a desponding soul with all the grace of earth and heaven. Surely he will not let his grief become despair, when all around him and above him there is a present and convincing witness that, though God is intolerant of sin, He is the refuge of the penitent.

The gracious and conciliatory tone of these verses seems to me worthy of special admiration; and I can only express my astonishment that to some they have appeared insincere, a vain attempt to cover a defeat with the semblance of victory, a surrender to the opposition at Corinth, the painfulness of which is ill-disguised by the pretence of agreement with them. The exposition just given renders the refutation of such a view unnecessary. We ought rather to regard with reverence and affection the man who knew how to combine, so strikingly, unflinching principle and the deepest tenderness and consideration for others; we ought to propose his modesty, his sensitiveness to the feelings even of opponents, his sympathy with those who had no sympathy with him, as examples for our imitation. Paul had been deeply moved by what had

[1] In spite of the Vulgate, which has *in persona Christi*; of Luther, who gives *an Christi Statt*; and of the English versions, Authorised and Revised, which both give "in the person of Christ" (though the R.V. puts *presence* in the margin), there seems no room to doubt that "in the presence of Christ" is the true meaning. The same words in chap. iv. 6 are admittedly different in import; and in the only passages where ἐν προσώπῳ occurs with a genitive, it means "in presence of." These are Prov. viii. 30, where ἐν προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ is = לפניו; and Sir. xxxii. 6, where "Thou shalt not appear *before the Lord* empty" is ἐν π. Κυρίου.

taken place at Corinth, possibly he had been deeply injured; but even so his personal interest is kept in the background; for the obedient loyalty which he wishes to prove is not so much *his* interest as theirs to whom he writes. He cares only for others. He cares for the poor soul who has forfeited his place in the community; he cares for the good name of the Church; he cares for the honour of Jesus Christ; and he exerts all his power with these interests in view. If it needs rigour, he can be rigorous; if it needs passion, he can be passionate; if it needs consideration, graciousness, a conciliatory temper, a willingness to keep out of sight, he can be depended upon for all these virtues. If they were only affected, Paul would deserve the praise of a great diplomatist; but it is far easier to believe them real, and see in them the signs of a great minister of Christ.

The last verse puts the aim of his proceedings in another light: all this, he says, I do, "that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices." The important words in the last clause are of the same root; it is as if Paul had said: "Satan is very knowing, and is always on the alert to get the better of us; but we are not without knowledge of his knowing ways." It was the Apostle's acquaintance with the wiles of the devil which made him eager to see the restoration of the penitent sinner duly carried through. This implies one or two practical truths, with which, by way of application, this exposition may close.

(1) A scandal in the Church gives the devil an opportunity. When one who has named the name of Jesus, and vowed loyal obedience to Him, falls into open sin, it is a chance offered to the enemy which he

is not slow to improve. He uses it to discredit the very name of Christ: to turn that which ought to be to the world the symbol of the purest goodness into a synonym of hypocrisy. Christ has committed His honour, if not His character, to our keeping; and every lapse into vice gives Satan an advantage over Him.

(2) The devil finds his gain in the incompetence of the Church to deal with evil in the Spirit of Christ. It is a fine thing for him if he can drive the convicted sinner to despair, and persuade him that there is no more forgiveness with God. It is a fine thing if he can prompt those who love little, because they know little of God's love, to show themselves rigid, implacable, irreconcilable, even to the penitent. If he can deform the likeness of Christ into a morose Pharisaism, what an incalculable gain it is! If the disciples of Him who received sinners look askance on those who have lapsed, and chill the hope of restoration with cold suspicion and reserve, there will be joy over it, not in heaven, but in hell. And not only this, but the opposite is a device of the devil, of which we ought not to be ignorant. There is hardly a sin that some one has not an interest in extenuating. Even the incestuous person in Corinth had his defenders: there were some who were puffed up, and gloried in what he had done as an assertion of Christian liberty. The devil takes advantage of the scandals that occur in the Church to bribe and debauch men's consciences; indulgent words are spoken, which are not the voice of Christ's awful mercy, but of a miserable self-pity; the strongest and holiest thing in the world, the redeeming love of God, is adulterated and even confounded with the weakest and basest thing, the bad man's immoral forgiveness of himself. And not to mention anything else under

this head, could any one imagine what would please and suit the devil better than the absolutely unfeeling but extremely interesting gossip which resounds over every exposure of sin?

(3) But, lastly, the devil finds his advantage in the dissensions of Christians. What an opportunity he would have had in Corinth, had strained relations continued between the Apostle and the Church! What opportunities he has everywhere, when tempers are on edge, and every movement means friction, and every proposal rouses suspicion! The last prayer Christ prayed for His Church was that they might all be one: to be one in Him is the final security against the devices of Satan. What a frightful commentary the history of the Church is on this prayer! What frightful illustrations it furnishes of the devil's gain out of the saints' quarrels! There are plenty of subjects, of course, even in Church life, on which we may naturally and legitimately differ; but we ought to know better than to let the differences enter into our souls. At bottom, we should be all one; it is giving ourselves away to the enemy, if we do not, at all costs, "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

VII

CHRIST'S CAPTIVE

"Now when I came to Troas for the Gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened unto me in the Lord, I had no relief for my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia. But thanks be unto God, which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savour of His knowledge in every place. For we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them that are being saved, and in them that are perishing; to the one a savour from death unto death; to the other a savour from life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as the many, corrupting the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ."—2 Cor. ii. 12-17 (R.V.).

IN this passage the Apostle returns from what is virtually, if not formally, a digression, to the narrative which begins in chap. i. 8 f., and is continued in i. 15 f. At the same time he makes a transition to a new subject, really though not very explicitly connected with what goes before—namely, his independent and divinely granted authority as an apostle. In the last verses of chap. ii., and in chap. iii. 1-4, this is treated generally, but with reference in particular to the success of his ministry. He then goes on to contrast the older and the Christian dispensation, and the character of their respective ministries, and terminates the section with a noble statement of the spirit and principles with which he fulfilled his apostolic calling (chap. iv. 1-6).

Before leaving Ephesus, Paul had apparently made

an appointment to meet Titus, on his return from Corinth, at Troas. He went thither himself to preach the Gospel, and found an excellent opportunity for doing so; but the non-arrival of his brother kept him in such a state of unrest[1] that he was unable to make that use of it which he would otherwise have done. This seems a singular confession, but there is no reason to suppose that it was made with a bad conscience. Paul was probably grieved that he had not the heart to go in at the door which had been opened to him in the Lord, but he did not feel guilty. It was not selfishness which made him turn away, but the anxiety of a true pastor about other souls which God had committed to his care. "I had no relief *for my spirit*," he says; and the spirit, in his language, even though it be a constituent of man's nature, is that in him which is akin to the divine, and receptive of it. That very element in the Apostle, in virtue of which he could act for God at all, was already preoccupied, and though the people were there, ready to be evangelised, it was beyond his power to evangelise them. His spirit was absorbed and possessed by hopes and fears and prayers for the Corinthians; and as the human spirit, even when in contact with the divine, is finite, and only capable of so much and no more, he was obliged to let slip an occasion which he would otherwise have gladly seized. He probably felt with all missionaries that it is as important to secure as to win converts; and if the Corinthians were capable of reflection, they might reflect with shame on the loss which their sin had entailed on the people of Troas.

[1] The perfect ἔσχηκα seems at first sight out of place, but it is more expressive than the aorist. It suggests the *continuous* expectation of relief, which was always anew disappointed.

The disorders of their wilful community had engrossed the Apostle's spirit, and robbed their fellow-men across the sea of an apostolic ministry. They could not but feel how genuine was the Apostle's love, when he had made such a sacrifice to it; but such a sacrifice ought never to have been required.

When Paul could bear the suspense no longer, he said good-bye to the people of Troas, crossed the Thracian Sea, and advanced into Macedonia to meet Titus. He did meet him, and heard from him a full report of the state of matters at Corinth (chap. vii. 5 ff.); but here he does not take time to say so. He breaks out into a jubilant thanksgiving, occasioned primarily no doubt by the joyful tidings he had just received, but widening characteristically, and instantaneously, to cover all his apostolic work. It is as though he felt God's goodness to him to be all of a piece, and could not be sensitive to it in any particular instance without having the consciousness rise within him that he lived and moved and had his being in it. "Now to God be thanks, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ."

The peculiar and difficult word in this thanksgiving is *θριαμβεύοντι*. The sense which first strikes one as suitable is that which is given in the Authorised Version: "God which always *causeth us to triumph*." Practically Paul had been engaged in a conflict with the Corinthians, and for a time it had seemed not improbable that he might be beaten; but God had caused him to triumph in Christ—that is, acting in Christ's interests, in matters in which Christ's name and honour were at stake, the victory (as always) had remained with him; and for this he thanks God. This interpretation is still maintained by so excellent a scholar as Schmiedel, and the use of *θριαμβεύειν* in

this transitive sense is defended by the analogy of *μαθητεύειν* in Matt. xxviii. 19.

But appropriate as this interpretation is, there is one apparently fatal objection to it. There is no doubt that *θριαμβεύειν* is here used transitively, but we have not to guess, by analogy, what it must mean when so used; there are other examples which fix this unambiguously. One is found elsewhere in St. Paul himself (Col. ii. 15), where *θριαμβεύσας αὐτοὺς* indubitably means "having triumphed over them." In accordance with this, which is only one out of many instances,[1] the Revisers have displaced the old rendering here, and substituted for it, "Thanks be to God, which always *leadeth us in triumph*." The triumph here is God's, not the Apostle's; Paul is not the soldier who wins the battle, and shouts for victory, as he marches in the triumphal procession; he is the captive who is led in the Conqueror's train, and in whom men see the trophy of the Conqueror's power. When he says that God always leads him in triumph *in Christ*, the meaning is not perfectly obvious. He may intend to define, as it were, the area over which God's victory extends. In everything which is covered by the name and authority of Christ, God triumphantly asserts His power over the Apostle. Or, again, the words may signify that it is through Christ that God's victorious power is put forth. These two meanings, of course, are not inconsistent; and practically they coincide.

It cannot be denied, I think, if this is taken quite rigorously, that there is a certain air of irrelevance about it. It does not seem to be to the purpose of the passage to say that God always triumphs over

[1] See Grimm's Lexicon *s.v.*, or Lightfoot on Col. ii. 15.

Paul and those for whom He speaks, or even that He always leads them in triumph. It is this feeling, indeed, which mainly influences those who keep to the rendering of the Authorised Version, and regard Paul as the victor. But the meaning of *θριαμβεύοντι* is not really open to doubt, and the semblance of irrelevance disappears if we remember that we are dealing with a figure, and a figure which the Apostle himself does not press. Of course in an ordinary triumph, such as the triumph of Claudius over Caractacus, of which St. Paul may easily have heard, the captives had no share in the victory; it was not only a victory over them, but a victory against them. But when God wins a victory over man, and leads his captive in triumph, the captive too has an interest in what happens; it is the beginning of all triumphs, in any true sense, for him. If we apply this to the case before us, we shall see that the true meaning is not irrelevant. Paul had once been the enemy of God in Christ; he had fought against Him in his own soul, and in the Church which he persecuted and wasted. The battle had been long and strong; but not far from Damascus it had terminated in a decisive victory for God. There the mighty man fell, and the weapons of his warfare perished. His pride, his self-righteousness, his sense of superiority to others and of competence to attain to the righteousness of God, collapsed for ever, and he rose from the earth to be the slave of Jesus Christ. That was the beginning of God's triumph over him; from that hour God led him in triumph in Christ. But it was the beginning also of all that made the Apostle's life itself a triumph, not a career of hopeless internal strife, such as it had been, but of unbroken Christian victory. This, indeed,

is not involved *in the mere word* θριαμβεύοντι, but it is the real *thing* which was present to the Apostle's mind when he used the word. When we recognise this, we see that the charge of irrelevance does not really apply; while nothing could be more characteristic of the Apostle than to hide himself and his success in this way behind God's triumph over him and through him.

Further, the true meaning of the word, and the true connexion of ideas just explained, remind us that the only triumphs we can ever have, deserving the name, must begin with God's triumph over us. This is the one possible source of joy untroubled. We may be as selfish as we please, and as successful in our selfishness; we may distance all our rivals in the race for the world's prizes; we may appropriate and engross pleasure, wealth, knowledge, influence; and after all there will be one thing we must do without—the power and the happiness of thanking God. No one will ever be able to thank God because he has succeeded in pleasing himself, be the mode of his self-pleasing as respectable as you will; and he who has not thanked God with a whole heart, without misgiving and without reserve, does not know what joy is. Such thanksgiving and its joy have one condition: they rise up spontaneously in the soul when it allows God to triumph over it. When God appears to us in Jesus Christ, when in the omnipotence of His love and purity and truth He makes war upon our pride and falsehood and lusts, and prevails against them, and brings us low, then we are admitted to the secret of this apparently perplexing passage; we know how natural it is to cry, "Thanks be unto God who in His victory over us giveth us the victory! Thanks

be to Him who always leadeth us in triumph!" It is out of an experience like this that Paul speaks; it is the key to his whole life, and it has been illustrated anew by what has just happened at Corinth.

But to return to the Epistle. God is described by the Apostle not only as triumphing over them (*i.e.*, himself and his colleagues) in Christ, but as making manifest through them the savour of His knowledge in every place. It has been questioned whether "His" knowledge is the knowledge of God or of Christ. Grammatically, the question can hardly be answered; but, as we see from chap. iv. 6, the two things which it proposes to distinguish are really one; what is manifested in the apostolic ministry is the knowledge of God as He is revealed in Christ. But why does Paul use the expression "*the savour* of His knowledge"? It was suggested probably by the figure of the triumph, which was present to his mind in all the detail of its circumstances. Incense smoked on every altar as the victor passed through the streets of Rome; the fragrant steam floated over the procession, a silent proclamation of victory and joy. But Paul would not have appropriated this feature of the triumph, and applied it to his ministry, unless he had felt that there was a real point of comparison, that the knowledge of Christ which he diffused among men, wherever he went, was in very truth a fragrant thing.[1] True, he was not a free man; he had been subdued by God, and made the slave of Jesus Christ; as the Lord of glory went forth conquering and to conquer, over Syria and Asia and Macedonia and Greece, He led him as a captive in the triumphal march

[1] In *τὴν ὀσμὴν τῆς γνώσεως*, *γνώσεως* is gen. of apposition: the *ὀσμὴ* and the *γνῶσις* are one.

of His grace; he was the trophy of Christ's victory; every one who saw him saw that necessity was laid upon Him; but what a gracious necessity it was! "The *love* of Christ constraineth us." The captives who were dragged in chains behind a Roman chariot also made manifest the knowledge of their conqueror; they declared to all the spectators his power and his pitilessness; there was nothing in that knowledge to suggest the idea of a fragrance like incense. But as Paul moved through the world, all who had eyes to see saw in him not only the power but the sweetness of God's redeeming love. The mighty Victor made manifest through Him, not only His might, but His charm, not only His greatness, but His grace. It was a good thing, men felt, to be subdued and led in triumph like Paul; it was to move in an atmosphere perfumed by the love of Christ, as the air around the Roman triumph was perfumed with incense. The Apostle is so sensible of this that he weaves it into his sentence as an indispensable part of his thought; it is not merely the knowledge of God which is made manifest through him as he is led in triumph, but that knowledge as a fragrant, gracious thing, speaking to every one of victory and goodness and joy.

The very word "savour," in connexion with the "knowledge" of God in Christ, is full of meaning. It has its most direct application, of course, to preaching. When we proclaim the Gospel, do we always succeed in manifesting it as a savour? Or is not the savour—the sweetness, the winsomeness, the charm and attractiveness of it—the very thing that is most easily left out? Do we not catch it sometimes in the words of others, and wonder that it eludes our own? We miss what is most characteristic in the knowledge of God if

we miss this. We leave out that very element in the Evangel which makes it evangelic, and gives it its power to subdue and enchain the souls of men. But it is not to preachers only that the word "savour" speaks; it is of the widest possible application. Wherever Christ is leading a single soul in triumph, the fragrance of the Gospel should go forth; rather, it does go forth, in proportion as His triumph is complete. There is sure to be that in the life which will reveal the graciousness as well as the omnipotence of the Saviour. And it is this virtue which God uses as His main witness, as His chief instrument, to evangelise the world. In every relation of life it should tell. Nothing is so insuppressible, nothing so pervasive, as a fragrance. The lowliest life which Christ is really leading in triumph will speak infallibly and persuasively for Him. In a Christian brother or sister, brothers and sisters will find a new strength and tenderness, something that goes deeper than natural affection, and can stand severer shocks; they will catch the fragrance which declares that the Lord in His triumphant grace is there. And so in all situations, or, as the Apostle has it, "in every place." And if we are conscious that we fail in this matter, and that the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ is something to which our life gives no testimony, let us be sure that the explanation of it is to be found in self-will. There is something in us which has not yet made complete surrender to Him, and not till He leads us unresistingly in triumph will the sweet savour go forth.

At this point the Apostle's thought is arrested by the issues of his ministry, though he carries the figure of the fragrance, with a little pressure, through to the end. In God's sight, he says, or so far as God is

concerned, we are a sweet savour of Christ, a perfume redolent of Christ, in which He cannot but take pleasure. In other words, Christ proclaimed in the Gospel, and the ministries and lives which proclaim Him, are always a joy to God. They are a joy to Him, whatever men may think of them, alike in them that are being saved and in them that are perishing. To those who are being saved, they are a savour "from life to life"; to those who are perishing, a savour "from death to death." Here, as everywhere, St. Paul contemplates these exclusive opposites as the sole issues of man's life, and of the Gospel ministry. He makes no attempt to subordinate one to the other, no suggestion that the way of death may ultimately lead to life, much less that it must do so. The whole solemnity of the situation, which is faced in the cry "And who is sufficient for these things?" depends on the finality of the contrast between life and death. These are the goals set before men, and those who are being saved and those who are perishing are respectively on their way to one or the other. Who *is* sufficient for the calling of the Gospel ministry, when such are the alternatives involved in it? Who is sufficient, in love, in wisdom, in humility, in awful earnestness, for the duties of a calling the issues of which are life or death for ever?

There is considerable difficulty in the sixteenth verse, partly dogmatic, partly textual. Commentators so opposite in their bias as Chrysostom and Calvin have pondered and remarked upon the opposite effects here ascribed to the Gospel. It is easy to find analogies to these in nature. The same heat which hardens clay melts iron. The same sunlight which gladdens the healthy eye tortures that which is diseased. The

same honey which is sweet to the sound palate is nauseous to the sick; and so on. But such analogies do not explain anything, and one can hardly see what is meant by calling them illustrations. It remains finally inexplicable that the Gospel, which appeals to some with winning irresistible power, subduing and leading them in triumph, should excite in others a passion of antipathy which nothing else could provoke. This remains inexplicable, because it is irrational. Nothing that can be pointed to in the universe is the least like a bad heart closing itself against the love of Christ, like a bad man's will stiffening into absolute rigidity against the will of God. The preaching of the Gospel may be the occasion of such awful results, but it is not their cause. The God whom it proclaims is the God of grace; it is never His will that any should perish—always that all should be saved. But He can save only by subduing; His grace must exercise a sovereign power in us, which through righteousness will lead to life everlasting (Rom. v. 21). And when this exercise of power is resisted, when we match our self-will against the gracious saving will of God, our pride, our passions, our mere sloth, against the soul-constraining love of Christ; when we prevail in the war which God's mercy wages with our wickedness,—then the Gospel itself may be said to have ministered to our ruin; it was ordained to life, and we have made it a sentence of death. Yet even so, it is the joy and glory of God; it is a sweet savour to Him, fragrant of Christ and His love.

The textual difficulty is in the words *ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον*, and *ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωήν*. These words are rendered in the Revised Version "*from* death to death," and "*from* life to life." The Authorised Version, follow-

ing the *Textus Receptus*, which omits ἐκ in both clauses, renders "a savour *of* death unto death," and "*of* life unto life." In spite of the inferior MS. support, the *Textus Receptus* is preferred by many modern scholars—*e.g.*, Heinrici, Schmiedel, and Hofmann. They find it impossible to give any precise interpretation to the better attested reading, and an examination of any exposition which accepts it goes far to justify them. Thus Professor Beet comments: "*From death for death* (comp. Rom. i. 17): a scent proceeding *from*, and thus revealing the presence of, *death*; and, like malaria from a putrefying corpse, causing *death*. Paul's labours among some men revealed the eternal death which day by day cast an ever-deepening shadow upon them [this answers to ὀσμὴ ἐκ θανάτου]; and by arousing in them increased opposition to God, promoted the spiritual mortification which had already begun" [this answers to εἰς θάνατον]. Surely it is safe to say that nobody in Corinth could ever have guessed this from the words. Yet this is a favourable specimen of the interpretations given. If it were possible to take ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, and ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωήν, as Baur took ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν in Rom. i. 17, that would be the simplest way out of the difficulty, and quite satisfactory. What the Apostle said would then be this: that the Gospel which he preached, ever good as it was to God, had the most opposite characters and effects among men,—in some it was death *from beginning to end*, absolutely and unmitigatedly deadly in its nature and workings; in others, again, it was life from beginning to end—life was the uniform sign of its presence, and its invariable issue. This also is the meaning which we get by omitting ἐκ: the genitives ζωῆς and θανάτου are then adjectival,—a vital fragrance, with life as its element

and end; a fatal fragrance, the end of which is death. This has the advantage of being the meaning which occurs to an ordinary reader; and if the critically approved text, with the repeated ἐκ, cannot bear this interpretation, I think there is a fair case for defending the received text on exegetical grounds. Certainly nothing but the broad impression of the received text will ever enter the general mind.

The question that rises to the Apostle's lips as he confronts the solemn situation created by the Gospel is not directly answered. "Who is sufficient for these things? Who? I say. For we are not as the many,[1] who corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, we speak in Christ." Paul is conscious as he writes that his awful sense of responsibility as a preacher of the Gospel is not shared by all who exercise the same vocation. To be the bearer and the representative of a power with issues so tremendous ought surely to annihilate every thought of self; to let personal interest intrude is to declare oneself faithless and unworthy. We are startled to hear from Paul's lips what at first sight seems to be a charge of just such base self-seeking laid against the majority of preachers. "We are not as the many, corrupting the Word of God." The expressive word rendered here "corrupting" has the idea of self-interest, and especially of petty gain, at its basis. It means

[1] "The many" (οἱ πολλοί) seems to be the true reading. "The rest" (οἱ λοιποί) would be stronger still in its condemnation. But probably Paul is not thinking of the Church in general, but of the teachers as a body who crossed and thwarted him in his chosen field. The transition which is immediately made to the case of his opponents (τινές, iii. 1), and to the comparison of the old and new covenants, suggests that his Judaistic adversaries in Corinth (see chap. xi.) are in view.

literally to sell in small quantities, to retail for profit. But it was specially applied to tavern-keeping, and extended to cover all the devices by which the wine-sellers in ancient times deceived their customers. Then it was used figuratively, as here; and Lucian, *e.g.*, speaks of philosophers as selling the sciences, and in most cases (*οἱ πολλοί*: a curious parallel to St. Paul), like tavern-keepers, "blending, adulterating, and giving bad measure." It is plain that there are two separable ideas here. One is that of men qualifying the Gospel, infiltrating their own ideas into the Word of God, tempering its severity, or perhaps its goodness, veiling its inexorableness, dealing in compromise. The other is that all such proceedings are faithless and dishonest, because some private interest underlies them. It need not be avarice, though it is as likely to be this as anything else. A man corrupts the Word of God, makes it the stock-in-trade of a paltry business of his own, in many other ways than by subordinating it to the need of a livelihood. When he exercises his calling as a minister for the gratification of his vanity, he does so. When he preaches not that awful message in which life and death are bound up, but himself, his cleverness, his learning, his humour, his fine voice even or fine gestures, he does so. He makes the Word minister to him, instead of being a minister of the Word; and that is the essence of the sin. It is the same if ambition be his motive, if he preaches to win disciples to himself, to gain an ascendency over souls, to become the head of a party which will bear the impress of his mind. There was something of this at Corinth; and not only there, but wherever it is found, such a spirit and such interests will change the character of the Gospel. It will not be preserved in

that integrity, in that simple, uncompromising, absolute character which it has as revealed in Christ. Have another interest in it than that of God, and that interest will inevitably colour it. You will make it what it was not, and the virtue will depart from it.

In contrast with all such dishonest ministers, the Apostle represents himself and his friends speaking "as of sincerity." They have no mixture of motives in their work as evangelists; they have indeed no independent motives at all: God is leading them in triumph, and proclaiming His grace through them. It is He who prompts every word (ὡς ἐκ Θεοῦ). Yet their responsibility and their freedom are intact. They feel themselves in His presence as they speak, and in that presence they speak "in Christ." "In Christ" is the Apostle's mark. Not in himself apart from Christ, where any mixture of motives, any process of adulteration, would have been possible, but only in that union with Christ which was the very life of his life, did he carry on his evangelistic work. This was his final security, and it is still the only security, that the Gospel can have fair play in the world.

VIII

LIVING EPISTLES

"Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? or need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables *that are* hearts of flesh."—2 Cor. iii. 1-3 (R.V.).

ARE we beginning again to commend ourselves?" Paul does not mean by these words to admit that he had been commending himself before: he means that he has been accused already of doing so, and that there are those at Corinth who, when they hear such passages of this letter as that which has just preceded, will be ready to repeat the accusation. In the First Epistle he had found it necessary to vindicate his apostolic authority, and especially his interest in the Corinthian Church as its spiritual father (1 Cor. ix. 1-27, iv. 6-21), and obviously his enemies at Corinth had tried to turn these personal passages against him. They did so on the principle *Qui s'excuse s'accuse.* "He is commending himself," they said, "and self-commendation is an argument which discredits, instead of supporting, a cause." The Apostle had heard of these malicious speeches, and in this Epistle makes repeated reference to them (see chaps. v. 12, x. 18, xiii. 6). He entirely agreed with his opponents that self-praise was

no honour. "Not he who commendeth himself is approved, but he whom the Lord commendeth." But he denied point-blank that he was commending himself. In distinguishing as he had done in chap. ii. 14-17 between himself and his colleagues, who spoke the Word "as of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God," and "the many" who corrupted it, nothing was further from his mind than to plead his cause, as a suspected person, with the Corinthians. Only malignity could suppose any such thing, and the indignant question with which the chapter opens tacitly accuses his adversaries of this hateful vice. It is pitiful to see a great and generous spirit like Paul compelled thus to stand upon guard, and watch against the possible misconstruction of every lightest word. What needless pain it inflicts upon him, what needless humiliation! How it checks all effusion of feeling, and robs what should be brotherly intercourse of everything that can make it free and glad! Further on in the Epistle there will be abundant opportunity of speaking on this subject at greater length; but it is proper to remark here that a minister's character is the whole capital he has for carrying on his business, and that nothing can be more cruel and wicked than to cast suspicion on it without cause. In most other callings a man may go on, no matter what his character, provided his balance at the bank is on the right side; but an evangelist or a pastor who has lost his character has lost everything. It is humiliating to be subject to suspicion, painful to be silent under it, degrading to speak. At a later stage Paul was compelled to go further than he goes here; but let the indignant emotion of this abrupt question remind us that candour is to be met with candour, and that the suspicious temper which would fain malign the good

eats like a canker the very heart of those who cherish it.

From the serious tone the Apostle passes suddenly to the ironical. "Or need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you?" The "some" of this verse are probably the same as "the many" of chap. ii. 17. Persons had come to Corinth in the character of Christian teachers, bringing with them recommendatory letters which secured their standing when they arrived. An example of what is meant can be seen in Acts xviii. 27. There we are told that when Apollos, who had been working in Ephesus, was minded to pass over into Achaia, the Ephesian brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him—that is, they gave him an epistle of commendation, which secured him recognition and welcome in Corinth. A similar case is found in Rom. xvi. 1, where the Apostle uses the very word which we have here: "I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a servant of the Church that is at Cenchreæ: that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you: for she herself also hath been a succourer of many, and of mine own self." This was Phœbe's introduction, or epistle of commendation, to the Church of Rome. The Corinthians were evidently in the habit both of receiving such letters from other Churches, and of granting them on their own account; and Paul asks them ironically if they think he ought to bring one, or when he leaves them to apply for one. Is *that* the relation which ought to obtain between him and them? The "some," to whom he refers, had no doubt come from Jerusalem: it is they who are referred to in chap. xi. 22 ff. But it does not follow that their recommendatory letters had been

signed by Peter, James, and John; and just as little that those letters justified them in their hostility to Paul. No doubt there were many—many myriads, the Book of Acts says—at Jerusalem, whose conception of the Gospel was very different from his, and who were glad to counteract him whenever they could; but there were many also, including the three who seemed to be pillars, who had a thoroughly good understanding with him, and who had no responsibility for the "some" and their doings. The epistles which the "some" brought were plainly such as the Corinthians themselves could grant, and it is a complete misinterpretation to suppose that they were a commission granted by the Twelve for the persecution of Paul.

The giving of recommendatory letters is a subject of considerable practical interest. When they are merely formal, as in our certificates of Church membership, they come to mean very little. It is an unhappy state of affairs perhaps, but no one would take a certificate of Church membership by itself as a satisfactory recommendation. And when we go past the merely formal, difficult questions arise. Many people have an estimate of their own character and competence, in which it is impossible for others to share, and yet they apply without misgiving to their friends, and especially to their minister or their employer, to grant them "epistles of commendation." We are bound to be generous in these things, but we are bound also to be honest. The rule which ought to guide us, especially in all that belongs to the Church and its work, is the interest of the cause, and not of the worker. To flatter is to do a wrong, not only to the person flattered, but to the cause in which you are trying to employ him. There is no more ludicrous

reading in the world than a bundle of certificates, or testimonials, as they are called. As a rule, they certify nothing but the total absence of judgment and conscience in the people who have granted them. If you do not know whether a person is qualified for any given situation or not, you do not need to say anything about it. If you know he is not, and he asks you to say that he is, no personal consideration must keep you from kindly but firmly declining. I am not preaching suspicion, or reserve, or anything ungenerous, but justice and truth. It is wicked to betray a great interest by bespeaking it for incompetent hands; it is cruel to put any one into a place for which he is unfit. Where you are confident that the man and the work will be well matched, be as generous as you please; but never forget that the work is to be considered in the first place, and the man only in the second.

Paul has been serious, and ironical, in the first verse; in ver. 2 he becomes serious again, and remains so. "*You*," he says, answering his ironical question, "*you* are our epistle." Epistle, of course, is to be taken in the sense of the preceding verse. "*You* are the commendatory letter which *I* show, when I am asked for my credentials." But to whom does he show it? In the first instance, to the captious Corinthians themselves. The tone of chap. ix. in the First Epistle is struck here again: "Wherever I may need recommendations, it is certainly not at Corinth." "If I be not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you: the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." Had they been a Christian community when he first visited them, they might have asked who he was; but they owed their Christianity to him; he was their father in Christ; to put him to the question in this superior,

suspicious style was unnatural, unfilial ingratitude. They themselves were the living evidence of the very thing which they threw doubt upon—the apostleship of Paul.

This bold utterance may well excite misgivings in those who preach constantly, yet see no result of their work. It is common to disparage success, the success of visible acknowledged conversions, of bad men openly renouncing badness, bearing witness against themselves, and embracing a new life. It is common to glorify the ministry which works on, patient and uncomplaining, in one monotonous round, ever sowing, but never reaping, ever casting the net, but never drawing in the fish, ever marking time, but never advancing. Paul frankly and repeatedly appeals to his success in evangelistic work as the final and sufficient proof that God had called him, and had given him authority as an apostle; and search as we will, we shall not find any test so good and unequivocal as this success. Paul had seen the Lord; he was qualified to be a witness of the Resurrection; but these, at the very most, were his own affair, till the witness he bore had proved its power in the hearts and consciences of others. How to provide, to train, and to test the men who are to be the ministers of the Christian Church is a matter of the very utmost consequence, to which sufficient attention has not yet been given. Congregations which choose their own pastor are often compelled to take a man quite untried, and to judge him more or less on superficial grounds. They can easily find out whether he is a competent scholar; they can see for themselves what are his gifts of speech, his virtues or defects of manner; they can get such an impression as sensible people always get, by seeing and hearing a

man, of the general earnestness or lack of earnestness in his character. But often they feel that more is wanted. It is not exactly more in the way of character; the members of a Church have no right to expect that their minister will be a truer Christian than they themselves are. A special inquisition into his conversion, or his religious experience, is mere hypocrisy; if the Church is not sufficiently in earnest to guard herself against insincere members, she must take the risk of insincere ministers. What is wanted is what the Apostle indicates here—that intimation of God's concurrence which is given through success in evangelistic work. No other intimation of God's concurrence is infallible—no call by a congregation, no ordination by a presbytery or by a bishop. Theological education is easily provided, and easily tested; but it will not be so easy to introduce the reforms which are needed in this direction. Great masses of Christian people, however, are becoming alive to the necessity for them; and when the pressure is more strongly felt, the way for action will be discovered. Only those who can appeal to what they have done in the Gospel can be known to have the qualifications of Gospel ministers; and in due time the fact will be frankly recognised.

The conversion and new life of the Corinthians were Paul's certificate as an apostle. They were a certificate known, he says, and read by all men. Often there is a certain awkwardness in the presenting of credentials. It embarrasses a man when he has to put his hand into his breast pocket, and take out his character, and submit it for inspection. Paul was saved this embarrassment. There was a fine unsought publicity about his testimonials. Everybody knew what the Corinthians had been, everybody knew what

they were; and the man to whom the change was due needed no other recommendation to a Christian society. Whoever looked at them saw plainly that they were an epistle of Christ; the mind of Christ could be read upon them, and it had been written by the intervention of Paul's hand. This is an interesting though a well-worn conception of the Christian character. Every life has a meaning, we say; every face is a record; but the text goes further. The life of the Christian is an epistle; it has not only a meaning, but an address; it is a message from Christ to the world. Is Christ's message to men legible on our lives? When those who are without look at us, do they see the hand of Christ quite unmistakably? Does it ever occur to anybody that there is something in our life which is not of the world, but which is a message to the world from Christ? Did you ever, startled by the unusual brightness of a true Christian's life, ask as it were involuntarily, "Whose image and superscription is this?" and feel as you asked it that these features, these characters, could only have been traced by one hand, and that they proclaimed to all the grace and power of Jesus Christ? Christ wishes so to write upon us that men may see what He does for man. He wishes to engrave His image on our nature, that all spectators may feel that it has a message for them, and may crave the same favour. A congregation which is not in its very existence and in all its works and ways a legible epistle, an unmistakable message from Christ to man, does not answer to this New Testament ideal.

Paul claims no part here but that of Christ's instrument. The Lord, so to speak, dictated the letter, and he wrote it. The contents of it were prescribed by

Christ, and through the Apostle's ministry became visible and legible in the Corinthians. More important is it to notice with what the writing was done: "not with ink," says St. Paul, "but with the Spirit of the living God." At first sight this contrast seems formal and fantastic; nobody, we think, could ever dream of making either of these things do the work of the other, so that it seems perfectly gratuitous in Paul to say, "not with ink, but with the Spirit." Yet ink is sometimes made to bear a great deal of responsibility. The characters of the τινὲς ("some") in ver. i. were only written in ink; they had nothing, Paul implies, to recommend them but these documents in black and white. That was hardly sufficient to guarantee their authority, or their competence as ministers in the Christian dispensation. But do not Churches yet accept their ministers with the same inadequate testimonials? A distinguished career at the University, or in the Divinity Schools, proves that a man can write with ink, under favourable circumstances; it does not prove more than that; it does not prove that he will be spiritually effective, and everything else is irrelevant. I do not say this to disparage the professional training of ministers; on the contrary, the standard of training ought to be higher than it is in all the Churches: I only wish to insist that nothing which can be represented in ink, no learning, no literary gifts, no critical acquaintance with the Scriptures even, can write upon human nature the Epistle of Christ. To do that needs "the Spirit of the living God." We feel, the moment we come upon those words, that the Apostle is anticipating; he has in view already the contrast he is going to develop between the old dispensation and the new, and the irresistible inward power by which the new

is characterised. Others might boast of qualifications to preach which could be certified in due documentary form, but he carried in him wherever he went a power which was its own witness, and which overruled and dispensed with every other. Let all of us who teach or preach concentrate our interest here. It is in "the Spirit of the living God," not in any acquirements of our own, still less in any recommendations of others, that our serviceableness as ministers of Christ lies. We cannot write His epistle without it. We cannot see, let us be as diligent and indefatigable in our work as we please, the image of Christ gradually come out in those to whom we minister. Parents, teachers, preachers, this is the one thing needful for us all. "Tarry," said Jesus to the first evangelists, "tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high"; it is of no use to begin without that.

This idea of the "epistle" has taken such a hold of the Apostle's mind, and he finds it so suggestive whichever way he turns it, that he really tries to say too much about it in one sentence. The crowding of his ideas is confusing. One learned critic enumerates three points in which the figure becomes inconsistent with itself, and another can only defend the Apostle by saying that this figurative letter might well have qualities which would be self-contradictory in a real one. This kind of criticism smells a little of ink, and the only real difficulty in the sentence has never misled any one who read it with sympathy. It is this—that St. Paul speaks of the letter as written in two different places. "Ye are our epistle," he says at the beginning, "written *in our hearts*"; but at the end he says, "written not on tables of stone, but on tables that are hearts of flesh"—meaning evidently *on the hearts*

of the Corinthians. Of course this last is the sense which coheres with the figure. Paul's ministry wrote the Epistle of Christ upon the Corinthians, or, if we prefer it, wrought such a change in their hearts that they became an epistle of Christ, an epistle to which he appealed in proof of his apostolic calling. In expressing himself as he does about this, he is again anticipating the coming contrast of Law and Gospel. Nobody would think of writing a *letter* on tables of stone, and he only says "not on stone tables" because he has in his mind the difference between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensation. It is quite out of place to refer to Ezek. xi. 19, xxxvi. 26, and to drag in the contrast between hard and tender hearts. What Paul means is that the Epistle of Christ is not written on dead matter, but on human nature, and that too at its finest and deepest. When we remember the sense of depth and inwardness which attaches to the heart in Scripture, it is not forcing the words to find in them the suggestion that the Gospel works no merely outward change. It is not written on the surface, but in the soul. The Spirit of the living God finds access for itself to the secret places of the human spirit; the most hidden recesses of our nature are open to it, and the very heart is made new. To be able to write *there* for Christ, to point not to anything dead, but to living men and women, not to anything superficial, but to a change that has reached the very core of man's being, and works its way out from thence, is the testimonial which guarantees the evangelist; it is the divine attestation that he is in the true apostolical succession.[1]

[1] The true reading of the last words in ver. 3 is doubtful. The Received Text has *ἐν πλαξὶ καρδίας σαρκίναις.* This is as old as Irenæus and Origen, and is found in many versions. Almost all

What, then, does Paul mean by the other clause, "ye are our epistle, written on *our* hearts"? I do not think we can get much more than an emotional certainty about this expression. When a man has been an intensely interested spectator, still more an intensely interested actor, in any great affair, he might say afterwards that the whole thing and all its circumstances were engraved upon his heart. I imagine that is what St. Paul means here. The conversion of the Corinthians made them an epistle of Christ; in making them believers through St. Paul's ministry, Christ wrote on *their* hearts what was really an epistle to the world; and the whole transaction, in which Paul's feelings had been deeply engaged, stood written on *his* heart for ever. Interpretations that go beyond this do not seem to me to be justified by the words. Thus Heinrici and Meyer say, "We have in our own consciousness the certainty of being recommended to you by yourselves and to others by you"; and they elucidate this by saying, "The Apostle's *own good consciousness* was, as it were, *the tablet* on which this living epistle of the Corinthians stood, and *that* had to be left unassailed even by the most malevolent." A sense so pragmatical and pedantic, even if one can grasp it at all, is surely out of place, and many readers will fail to discover it in the text. What the words do convey is the warm

MSS. give the reading which is translated in the Revised Version: ἐν πλαξὶ καρδίαις σαρκίναις (ℵ, A, B, C, D, etc.); and this is adopted by most of the purely critical editors. Some, however, and many exegetes, suspect a primitive error, affecting all MSS. and versions. Schmiedel would omit καρδίαις or καρδίας, as a marginal note, suggested by Prov. vii. 3, Jer. xvii. 1; Westcott and Hort, on the other hand, think that πλαξὶ may be a primitive interpolation. No certainty is possible; but considering Old Testament usage, one would expect Paul to write ἐν πλαξὶ καρδίας almost unconsciously.

love of the Apostle, who had exercised his ministry among the Corinthians with all the passion of his nature, and who still bore on his ardent heart the fresh impression of his work and its results.

Amid all these details let us take care not to lose the one great lesson of the passage. Christian people owe a testimony to Christ. His name has been pronounced over them, and all who look at them ought to see His nature. We should discern in the heart and in the behaviour of Christians the handwriting, let us say the characters, not of avarice, of suspicion, of envy, of lust, of falsehood, of pride, but of Christ. It is to us He has committed Himself; we are the certification to men of what He does for man; His character is in our care. The true epistles of Christ to the world are not those which are expounded in pulpits; they are not even the gospels in which Christ Himself lives and moves before us; they are living men and women, on the tables of whose hearts the Spirit of the living God, ministered by a true evangelist, has engraved the likeness of Christ Himself. It is not the written Word on which Christianity ultimately depends; it is not the sacraments, nor so-called necessary institutions: it is this inward, spiritual, Divine writing which is the guarantee of all else.

IX

THE TWO COVENANTS

"And such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written, *and* engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which *glory* was passing away: how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation is glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. For if that which passeth away *was* with glory, much more that which remaineth *is* in glory."—2 Cor. iii. 4-11 (R.V.).

THE confidence referred to in the opening of this passage is that which underlies the triumphant sentences at the end of the second chapter. The tone of those sentences was open to misinterpretation, and Paul guards himself against this on two sides. To begin with, his motive in so expressing himself was quite pure: he had no thought of commending himself to the Corinthians. And, again, the ground of his confidence was not in himself. The courage which he had to speak as he did he had through Jesus Christ, and that, too, in relation to God. It was virtually confidence in God, and therefore inspired by God.

It is this last aspect of his confidence which is

expanded in the fifth verse: "not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." This vehement disclaimer of any self-sufficiency has naturally been taken in the widest sense, and theologians from Augustine downward have found in it one of the most decisive proofs of the inability of man for any spiritual good accompanying salvation. No one, we may be sure, would have ascribed salvation, and all spiritual good accompanying it, entirely to God with more hearty sincerity than the Apostle; but it does seem better here to give his words a narrower and more relevant interpretation. The "sufficiency to account anything," of which he speaks, must have a definite meaning for the context; and this meaning is suggested by the words of chap. ii. 14-17. Paul would never have dared, he tells us—indeed, he would never have been able—on his own motion, and out of his own resources, either to form conclusions, or to express them, on the subjects there in view. It is not for any man at random to say what the true Gospel is, what are its issues, what the responsibilities of its hearers or preachers, what is the spirit requisite in the evangelist, or what are the methods legitimate for him. The Gospel is God's concern, and only those who have been capacitated by Him are entitled to speak as Paul has spoken. If this is a narrower sense than that which is expounded so vigorously by Calvin, it is more pertinent, and some will find it quite as pungent. Of all things that are done hastily and inconsiderately, by people calling themselves Christian, the criticism of evangelists is one of the most conspicuous. At his own prompting, out of his own wise head, any man almost will both make up his mind and speak his

mind about any preacher with no sense of responsibility whatever. Paul certainly did form opinions about preachers, opinions which were anything but flattering; but he did it through Jesus Christ and in relation to God; he did it because, as he writes, God had made him sufficient, *i.e.* had given him capacity to be, and the capacity of, a true evangelist, so that he knew both what the Gospel was, and how it ought to be proclaimed. It would silence much incompetent, because self-sufficient, criticism, if no one "thought anything" who had not this qualification.

The qualification having been mentioned, the Apostle proceeds, as usual, to enlarge upon it. "Our sufficiency is of God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of letter, but of spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." At the first glance, we see no reason why his thought should take this direction, and it can only be because those whom he is opposing, and with whom he has contrasted himself in chap. ii. 17, are in some sense representatives of the old covenant, ministers of the letter in spite of their claim to be evangelists, and appealing not to a competency which came from God, but to one which rested on "the flesh." They based their title to preach on certain advantages of birth, or on having known Jesus when He lived in the world, or perhaps on certification by others who had known Him; at all events, not on that spiritual competence which Paul's ministry at Corinth had shown him to possess. That this was really the case will be seen more fully at a later stage (especially in chaps. x. ff.).

With the words "ministers of a new covenant" we enter upon one of the great passages in St. Paul's writings, and are allowed to see one of the inspiring

and governing ideas in his mind. "Covenant," even to people familiar with the Bible, is beginning to be a remote and technical term; it needs to be translated or explained. If no more than another word is to be used, perhaps "dispensation" or "constitution" would suggest something. God's covenant with Israel was the whole constitution under which God was the God of Israel, and Israel the people of God. The new covenant of which Paul speaks necessarily implies an old one; and the old one is this covenant with Israel. It was a national covenant, and for that, among other reasons, it was represented and embodied in legal forms. There was a legal constitution under which the nation lived, and according to which all God's dealings with it, and all its dealings with God, were regulated. Without entering more deeply, in the meantime, into the nature of this constitution, or the religious experiences which were possible to those who lived under it, it is sufficient to notice that the best spirits in the nation became conscious of its inadequacy, and eventually of its failure. Jeremiah, who lived through the long agony of his country's dissolution, and saw the final collapse of the ancient order, felt this failure most deeply, and was consoled by the vision of a brighter future. That future rested for him on a more intimate relation of God to His people, on a constitution, as we may fairly paraphrase his words, less legal and more spiritual. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this is the

covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." This wonderful passage, so profound, so spiritual, so evangelical, is the utmost reach of prophecy; it is a sort of stepping-stone between the Old Testament and the New. Jeremiah has cried to God out of the depths, and God has heard his cry, and raised him to a spiritual height from which his eye ranges over the land of promise, and rests with yearning on all its grandest features. We do not know whether many of his contemporaries or successors were able to climb the mount which offered this glorious prospect; but we know that the promise remained a promise—a rainbow light across the dark cloud of national disaster—till Christ claimed its fulfilment as His work. It was His to make good all that the prophets had spoken; and when in the last hours of His life He said to His disciples, "This is My blood of the covenant,[1] which is shed for many, for the remission of sins," it was exactly as if He had laid His hand on that passage of Jeremiah, and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled before your eyes." By the death of Jesus a new spiritual order was established; it rested on the forgiveness of sins, it made God accessible to all, it made

[1] The true reading in Matt. xxvi. 28 omits "new," but the reference is unmistakable.

obedience an instinct and a joy; all the intercourse of God and man was carried on upon a new footing, under a new constitution; to use the words of the prophet and the apostle, God made a new covenant with His people.

Among the Christians of the first age, no one so thoroughly appreciated the newness of Christianity, or was so immensely impressed by it, as St. Paul. The difference between the earlier dispensation and the later, between the religion of Moses' disciples and the religion of believers in Jesus Christ, was one that could hardly be exaggerated; he himself had been a zealot of the old, he was now a zealot of the new; and the gulf between his former and his present self was one that no geometry could measure. He had lived, after the straitest sect of the old religion, a Pharisee; touching the righteousness which is in the law he could call himself blameless; he had tasted the whole bitterness of the legalism, the formality, the bondage, in which the old covenant entangled those who were devoted to it in his days. It is with this in his memory that he here sets the old and the new in unrelieved opposition to each other. His feeling is like that of a man who has just been liberated from prison, and whose whole mind is possessed and filled up with the single sensation that it is one thing to be chained, and another thing to be free. In the passage before us, this is all the Apostle has in view. He speaks as if the old covenant and the new had nothing in common, as if the new, to borrow Baur's expression, had merely a negative relation to the old, as if it could only be contrasted with it, and not compared to it, or illustrated by it. And with this restricted view he characterises the old dispensation as one of letter, and the new as one

of spirit.[1] Speaking out of his own experience, which was not solitary, but typical, he could truly speak thus. The essence of the old, to a Pharisee born and bred, was its documentary, statutory character: the law, written in letters, on stone tablets or parchment sheets, simply confronted men with its uninspiring imperative; it had never yet given any one a good conscience or enabled him to attain to the righteousness of God. The essence of the new, on the other hand, was spirit; the Christian was one in whom, through Christ, the Holy Spirit of God dwelt, putting the righteousness of God within his reach, enabling him to perfect holiness in God's fear. The contrast is made absolute, *pro tem.* There is no "spirit" in the old at all; there is no "letter" in the new. This last assertion was more natural then than now; for at the time when Paul wrote this Epistle, there was no "New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" consigned in documents and collected for the use of the Church. The Gospel existed in the world, not at all in books, but only in men; all the epistles were living epistles; there was literally no letter, but only spirit.

This, doubtless, is the explanation of the blank antithesis of the old covenant and the new in the passage before us. But it is obvious, when we think of it, that this antithesis does not exhaust the relations of the two. It is not the whole truth about the earlier dispensation to say that, while the new is spiritual, *it* is not. The religion of the Old Testament was not mere legalism; if it had been, the Old Testament would be for us an unprofitable and almost an unintelligible

[1] Grammatically, it is probable that γράμματος and πνεύματος in ver. 6 depend, not on διαθήκης, but on διακόνους; but the sense is all one.

book. That religion had its spiritual side, as all but utterly corrupt religions always have; God administered His grace to His people through it, and in psalms and prophecies we have records of their experiences, which are not legal, but spiritual, and priceless even to Christian men. Nor would Paul, under other circumstances, have refused to admit this; on the contrary, it is a prominent element in his teaching. He knows that the old bears in its bosom the promise of the new, a sum of promises that has been confirmed and made good in Jesus Christ (chap. i. 20). He knows that the righteousness of God, which is proclaimed in the Gospel, is witnessed to by the law and the prophets (Rom. iii. 21). He knows that "the law," even, is "spiritual" (Rom. vii. 14). He knows that the righteousness of faith was a secret revealed to David (Rom. iv. 6 f.). He would probably have agreed with Stephen that the oracles received and delivered by Moses in the wilderness were "living" oracles; and his profound mind would have thrilled to hear that great word of Jesus, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Had he lived to a time like ours, when the Gospel also has been embodied in a book, instead of using "letter" and "spirit" as mutually exclusive, he would have admitted, as we do, that both ideas apply, in some sense, to both dispensations, and that it is possible to take the old and the new alike either in the letter or in the spirit. Nevertheless, he would have been entitled to say that, if they were to be characterised in their differences, they must be characterised as he has done it: the mark of the old, as opposed to the new, is literalism, or legalism; the mark of the new, as opposed to the old, is spirituality, or freedom. They differ as law differs from life, as compulsion from inspiration. Taken

thus, no one can have any difficulty in agreeing with him.

But the Apostle does not rest in generalities: he goes on to a more particular comparison of the old and the new dispensations, and especially to a demonstration that the new is the more glorious. He starts with a statement of their working, as dependent on their nature just described. One is letter; the other, spirit. Well, the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. A sentence so pregnant as this, and so capable of various applications, must have been very perplexing to the Corinthians, had they not been fairly acquainted beforehand with the Apostle's "form of doctrine" (Rom. vi. 17). It condenses in itself a whole cycle of his characteristic thoughts. All that he says in the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians about the working of the law, in its relation to the flesh, is represented in "the letter killeth." The power of the law to create the consciousness of sin and to intensify it; to stimulate transgression, and so make sin exceeding sinful, and shut men up in despair; to pass sentence upon the guilty, the hopeless sentence of death,—all this is involved in the words. The fulness of meaning is as ample in "the spirit giveth life." The Spirit of Christ, given to those who receive Christ in the Gospel, is an infinite power and an infinite promise. It includes the reversal of all that the letter has wrought. The sentence of death is reversed; the impotence to good is counteracted and overcome; the soul looks out to, and anticipates, not the blackness of darkness for ever, but the everlasting glory of Christ.[1] When the Apostle has

[1] The contrast of "letter" and "spirit" has, as is well known, been taken in various ways. That which is given above undoubtedly represents St. Paul's mind, and may be called the historical interpre-

written these two little sentences—when he has supplied "letter" and "spirit" with the predicates "kill" and "make alive," in the sense which they bear in the Christian revelation—he has gone as far as the mind of man can go in stating an effective contrast. But he works it out with reference to some special points in which the superiority of the new to the old is to be observed.

(1) In the first place, the ministry of the old was a ministry of death. Even as such it had a glory, or splendour, of its own. The face of Moses, its great minister, shone after he had been in the presence of God; and though that brightness was passing away even as men caught sight of it (*τὴν καταργουμένην* is partic. impf.), it was so resplendent as to dazzle the beholders. But the ministry of the new is a ministry of spirit: and who would not argue *a fortiori* that it should appear in glory greater still? Both the *μᾶλλον* ("rather"), and the future (*ἔσται*), in ver. 8, are logical. Paul speaks, to use Bengel's expression, looking forward as it were from the Old Testament into the New. He does not say in what the glory of the new consists.

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tation. An interpretation so common in early times that it might fairly be called the patristic, would explain the words as meaning that the *literal* sense of the Scriptures, especially of the Old Testament, is fatally misleading, and that we must find what that literal sense represents to the laws of allegory, if we would make it a word of life (cf. in Rev. xi. 8, "the great city, which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified"). There is another interpretation still, which may be called the literary or practical one. According to this, the Apostle means that the spiritual life, whether of intelligence or conscience, is strangled by literalism; we must regard not words as such, but the spirit and purpose of their author, if we are to have life and progress. This is perfectly true, but perfectly irrelevant, and is a good example of the free-and-easy way in which the Bible is quoted by those who do not study it.

He does not say that it is veiled at present, and will be manifested when Christ comes to transfigure His own. Even the use of "hope" in ver. 12 does not prove this. He leaves it quite indefinite; and arguing from the nature of the two ministries, which has just been explained, simply concludes that in glory the new must far transcend the old.

(2) In vv. 9 and 10 he puts a new point upon this. "Death" and "life" are here replaced by "condemnation" and "righteousness." It is through condemnation that man becomes the prey of death; and the grace which reigns in him to eternal life reigns through righteousness (Rom. v. 21). The contrast of these two words is very significant for Paul's conception of the Gospel: it shows how essential to his idea of righteousness, how fundamental in it, is the thought of acquittal or acceptance with God. Men are bad men, sinful men, under God's condemnation; and he cannot conceive a Gospel at all which does not announce, at the very outset, the removal of that condemnation, and a declaration in the sinner's favour. Perhaps there are other ways of conceiving men, and other aspects in which God can come to them as their Saviour; but the Pauline Gospel has proved itself, and will always prove itself anew, the Gospel for the sinful, who know the misery of condemnation and despair. Mere pardon, as it has been called, may be a meagre conception, but it is that without which no other Christian conception can exist for a moment. That which lies at the bottom of the new covenant, and supports all its magnificent promises and hopes, is this: "I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." If we could imagine this taken away, what were left? Of course the righteousness

which the Gospel proclaims *is* more than pardon; it is not exhausted when we say it is the opposite of condemnation; but unless we feel that the very nerve of it lies in the removal of condemnation, we shall never understand the New Testament tone in speaking of it. It is this which explains the joyous rebound of the Apostle's spirit whenever he encounters the subject; he remembers the black cloud, and now there is clear shining; he was under sentence then, but now he is justified by faith, and has peace with God. He cannot exaggerate the contrast, nor the greater glory of the new state. Granting that the ministry of condemnation had its glory—that the revelation of law "had an austere majesty of its own"—does not the ministry of righteousness, the Gospel which annulled the condemnation and restored man to peace with God, overflow with glory? When he thinks of it, he is tempted to withdraw the concession he has made. We may call the old dispensation and its ministry glorious if we like; they are glorious when they stand alone; but when comparison is made with the new,[1] they are not glorious at all. The stars are bright till the moon rises; the moon herself reigns in heaven till her splendour pales before the sun; but when the sun shines in his strength, there is no other glory in the sky. All the glories of the old covenant have vanished for Paul in the light which shines from the Cross and from the Throne of Christ.

(3) A final superiority belongs to the new dispensation and its ministry as compared with the old—the

[1] Chrysostom explains ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέρει by κατὰ τὸν τῆς συγκρίσεως λόγον, and this is substantially right. But I think the words merely anticipate εἵνεκεν τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης.

superiority of permanence to transiency. "If that which passeth away *was* with glory, much more that which remaineth *is* in glory." The verbs here are supplied by the translators, but one may question whether the contrast of past and present was so definite in the Apostle's mind. I think not, and the reference to Moses' face does not prove that it was. All through these comparisons St. Paul expresses himself with the utmost generality; logical and ideal, not temporal, relations, dominate his thoughts. The law *was* given in glory (*ἐγενήθη ἐν δόξῃ*, ver. 7)—there is no dispute about that; but what the eleventh verse makes prominent is that while glory is the attendant or accompaniment of the transient, it is the element of the permanent. The law is indeed of God; it has a function in the economy of God; it is at the very lowest a negative preparation for the Gospel; it shuts men up to the acceptance of God's mercy. In this respect the glory on Moses' face represents the real greatness which belongs to the law as a power used by God in the working out of His loving purpose. But at the best the law only shuts men up to Christ, and then its work is done. The true greatness of God is revealed, and with it His true glory, once for all, in the Gospel. There is nothing beyond the righteousness of God, manifested in Christ Jesus, for the acceptance of faith. That is God's last word to the world: it has absorbed in it even the glory of the law; and it is bright for ever with a glory above all other. It is God's chief end to reveal this glory in the Gospel, and to make men partakers of it; it has been so always, is so still, and ever shall be; and in the consciousness that he has seen and been saved by the eternal love of God, and is now a minister of it, the Apostle claims this

finality of the new covenant as its crowning glory. The law, like the lower gifts of the Christian life, passes away; but the new covenant abides, for it is the revelation of love—that love which is the being and the glory of God Himself.

These qualities of the Christian dispensation, which constitute its newness, are too readily lost sight of. It is hard to appreciate and to live up to them, and hence they are always lapsing out of view, and requiring to be rediscovered. In the first age of Christianity there were many myriads of Jews, the Book of Acts tells us, who had very little sense of the newness of the Gospel; they were exceedingly zealous for the law, even for the letter of all its ritual prescriptions: Paul and his spiritual conception of Christianity were their bugbear. In the first half of the second century the religion even of the Gentile Churches had already become more legal than evangelical; there was wanting any sufficient apprehension of the spirituality, the freedom, and the newness of Christianity as opposed to Judaism; and though the reaction of Marcion, who denied that there was any connexion whatever between the Old Testament and the New, went to a false and perverse extreme, it was the natural, and in its motives the legitimate, protest of spirit and life against letter and law. The Reformation in the sixteenth century was essentially a movement of similar character: it was the rediscovery of the Pauline Gospel, or of the Gospel in those characteristics of it which made Paul's heart leap for joy—its justifying righteousness, its spirituality, its liberty. In a Protestant scholasticism this glorious Gospel has again been lost oftener than once; it is lost when "a learned ministry" deals with the New Testament writings as the scribes dealt with the Old;

it is lost also—for extremes meet—when an unlearned piety swears by verbal, even by literal, inspiration, and takes up to mere documents an attitude which in principle is fatal to Christianity. It is in the life of the Church—especially in that life which communicates itself, and makes the Christian community what the Jewish never was, essentially a missionary community—that the safeguard of all these high characteristics lies. A Church devoted to learning, or to the maintenance of a social or political position, or even merely to the cultivation of a type of character among its own members, may easily cease to be spiritual, and lapse into legal religion : a Church actively engaged in propagating itself never can. It is not with the "letter" one can hopefully address unbelieving men ; it is only with the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the heart ; and where the Spirit is, there is liberty. None are so "sound" on the essentials of the faith as men with the truly missionary spirit ; but at the same time none are so completely emancipated, and that by the self-same Spirit, from all that is not itself spiritual.

X

THE TRANSFIGURING SPIRIT

"Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech, and *are* not as Moses, *who* put a veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should not look stedfastly on the end of that which was passing away: but their minds were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth unlifted; which veil is done away in Christ. But unto this day, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart. But whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."—2 Cor. iii. 12-18 (R.V.).

THE "hope" which here explains the Apostle's freedom of speech is to all intents and purposes the same as the "confidence" in ver. 4.[1] It is much easier to suppose that the word is thus used with a certain latitude, as it might be in English, than to force upon it a reference to the glory to be revealed when Christ comes again, and to give the same future reference to "glory" all through this passage. The new covenant is present, and present in its glory; and though it has a future, with which the Apostle's hope is bound up, it is not in view of its future only, it is

[1] In the LXX. ἐλπίζω is often used as the rendering of בָּטַח, *confidere*.

because of what it is even now, that he is so grandly confident, and uses such boldness of speech. It is quite fair to infer from chap. iv. 3—"if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those that are perishing"—that Paul's opponents at Corinth had charged him with behaviour of another kind. They had accused him of making a mystery of his Gospel—preaching it in such a fashion that no one could really see it, or understand what he meant. If there is any charge which the true preacher will feel keenly, and resent vehemently, it is this. It is his first duty to deliver his message with a plainness that defies misunderstanding. He is sent to all men on an errand of life or death; and to leave any man wondering, after the message has been delivered, what it is about, is the worst sort of treachery. It belies the Gospel, and God who is its author. It may be due to pride, or to a misguided intention to commend the Gospel to the wisdom or the prejudices of men; but it is never anything else than a fatal mistake.

Paul not only resents the charge; he feels it so acutely that he finds an ingenious way of retorting it. "We," he says, "the ministers of the new covenant, we who preach life, righteousness, and everlasting glory, have nothing to hide; we wish every one to know everything about the dispensation which we serve. It is the representatives of the old who are really open to the charge of using concealment; the first and the greatest of them all, Moses himself, put a veil on his face, that[1] the children of Israel should not look sted-

[1] Attempts have been made to render *πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίσαι* otherwise: *e.g.*, *πρὸς* has been taken as in Matt. xix. 8, which would give the meaning, "considering that the children of Israel did not

fastly on the end of that which was passing away. The glory on his face was a fading glory, because it was the glory of a temporary dispensation; but he did not wish the Israelites to see clearly that it was destined to disappear; so he veiled his face, and left them to think the law a permanent divine institution."

Perhaps the best thing to do with this singular interpretation is not to take it too seriously. Even sober expositors like Chrysostom and Calvin have thought it necessary to argue gravely that the Apostle is not accusing the law, or saying anything insulting of Moses; while Schmiedel, on the other hand, insists that a grave moral charge *is* made against Moses, and that Paul most unjustly uses the Old Testament, in its own despite, to prove its own transitoriness. I believe it would be far truer to say that the character of Moses never crossed Paul's mind in the whole passage, for better or worse; he only remembered, as he smarted under the accusation of veiling his Gospel of the new covenant, a certain transaction under the old covenant in which a veil did figure—a transaction which a Rabbinical interpretation, whimsical indeed to us, but provoking if not convincing to his adversaries, enabled him to turn against them. As for proving the transitoriness of the Old Testament by a forced and illegitimate argument, that transitoriness was abundantly established to Paul, as it is to us, on real grounds; nothing whatever depends on what is here said of Moses and the veil. It is not necessary, if we take this view, to go into the historical interpretation of the

look on," etc. Moses would thus veil himself in view of the fact that they did not see: the veil would be the symbol of the judicial blindness which was henceforth to fall on them.

passage in Exod. xxxiv. 29-35. The comparison of the Apostle with the Old Testament writer has been made more difficult for the English reader by the serious error in the Authorised Version of Exod. xxxiv. 33. Instead of "*till* Moses had done speaking with them," we ought to read, as in the Revised Version, "*when* Moses had done speaking." This exactly reverses the meaning. Moses spoke to the people with face bare and radiant; the glory was to be visible at least in his official intercourse with them, or *whenever he spoke for God.* At other times he wore the veil, putting it off, however, when he went into the tabernacle—that is, *whenever he spoke with God.* In all divine relations, then, we should naturally infer, there was to be the open and shining face; in other words, so far as he acted as mediator of the old covenant, Moses really acted in the spirit of Paul. It would therefore have been unjust in the Apostle to charge him with hiding anything, if the charge had really meant more than this—that Paul saw in his use of the veil a symbol of the fact that the children of Israel did not see that the old covenant was transitory, and that its glory was to be lost in that of the new. No one can deny that this *was* the fact, and no one therefore need be exercised if Paul pictured it in the manner of his own time and race, and not in the manner of ours. To suppose that he means to charge Moses with a deliberate act of dishonesty is to suppose what no sensible person will ever credit; and we may return, without more ado, to the painful situation which he contemplates.

Their minds were hardened. This is stated historically, and seems to refer in the first instance to those who watched Moses put on the veil, and became insensible, as he did so, to the nature of the old

covenant. But it is applicable to the Jewish race at all periods of their history; they never discovered the secret which Moses hid from their forefathers beneath the veil. The only result that followed the labours even of great prophets like Isaiah had been the deepening of the darkness; having eyes the people saw not, having ears they heard not; their heart was fat and heavy, so that they did not apprehend the ways of God nor turn to Him. All around him the Apostle saw the melancholy evidence that there had been no change for the better. Until this day the same veil remains, when the Old Testament is read,[1] not taken away; for it is only undone in Christ, and of Christ they will know nothing. He repeats the sad statement, varying it slightly to indicate that the responsibility for a condition so blind and dreary rests not with the old covenant itself, but with those who live under it. "Until this day, I say, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lies upon their heart."

This witness, we must acknowledge, is almost as true in the nineteenth century as in the first. The Jews still exist as a race and a sect, acknowledging the Old Testament as a revelation from God, basing their religion upon it, keeping their ancient law so far as circumstances enable them to keep it, not convinced that as a religious constitution it has been superseded by a new one. Many of them, indeed, have abandoned it without becoming Christians. But in so doing they have become secularists; they have not appreciated the old covenant to the full, and then outgrown it; they

[1] I cannot suppose that *ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς π. διαθήκης* means anything different from *ἡνίκα ἂν ἀναγινώσκηται Μωϋσῆς*. It conveys no sense, that I can see, to say that there are *two veils*, one upon the reading, and another upon the heart. Yet many take it so.

have been led for various reasons to deny that there ever was anything divine in it, and have renounced together its discipline and its hopes. Only where the knowledge of the Christ has been received is the veil which lies upon their hearts taken away; they can then appreciate both all the virtues of the ancient dispensation and all its defects; they can glorify God for what it was and for what it shut them up to; they can see that in all its parts it had a reference to something lying beyond itself—to a "new thing" that God would do for His people; and in welcoming the new covenant, and its Mediator Jesus Christ, they can feel that they are not making void, but establishing, the law.

This is their hope, and to this the Apostle looks in ver. 16: "But whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away." The Greek expression of this passage is so closely modelled on that of Exod. xxxiv. 34, that Westcott and Hort print it as a quotation. Moses evidently is still in the Apostle's mind. The veiling of his face symbolised the nation's blindness; the nation's hope is to be seen in that action in which Moses was unveiled. He uncovered his face when he turned from the people to speak to God. "Even so," says the Apostle, "when *they* turn to the Lord, the veil of which we have been speaking is taken away,[1] and they see clearly."[2] One can hardly avoid feeling in

[1] The present, where we might expect the future, conveys the certainty and decisiveness of the result.

[2] The subject of the verb ἐπιστρέψῃ ("turn") is not in point of grammar very clear. It may be Israel, or the heart on which a veil lies, or any one, taken indefinitely. Practically, the application is limited to those who live under the old covenant, and yet have its nature hidden from them. Hence it is fair to render, as I have done, "when *they* turn to the Lord."

this a reminiscence of the Apostle's own conversion. He is thinking not only of the unveiling of Moses, but of the scales which fell from his own eyes when he was baptised in the name of Jesus, and was filled with the Holy Ghost, and saw the old covenant and its glory lost and fulfilled in the new. He knew how stupendous was the change involved here; it meant a revolution in the whole constitution of the Jews' spiritual world as vast as that which was wrought in the natural world when the sun supplanted the earth as the centre of our system. But the gain was corresponding. The soul was delivered from an *impasse*. Under the old covenant, as bitter experience had shown him, the religious life had come to a dead-lock; the conscience was confronted with a torturing, and in its very nature insoluble, problem: man, burdened and enslaved by sin, was required to attain to a righteousness which should please God. The contradictions of this position were solved, its mystery was abolished, when the soul turned to the Lord, and appropriated by faith the righteousness and life of God in him. The old covenant found its place, an intelligible and worthy though subordinate place, in the grand programme of redemption; the strife between the soul and God, between the soul and the conditions of existence, ceased; life opened out again; there was a large room to move in, an inspiring power within; in one word, there was spiritual life and liberty, and Christ was the author of it all.

This is the force of the seventeenth verse: "Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The Lord, of course, is Christ, and the Spirit is that of which Paul has already spoken in the sixth verse. It is the Holy Spirit, the Lord and

Giver of life under the new covenant. He who turns to Christ receives this Spirit; it is through it that Christ dwells in His people; what are called "fruits of the Spirit" are traits of Christ's own character which the Spirit produces in the saints; practically, therefore, the two may be identified, and hence the expression "the Lord is the Spirit," though startling at first sight, is not improper, and ought not to mislead.[1] It is a mistake to connect it with such passages as Rom. i. 4, and to draw inferences from it as to Paul's conception of the person of Christ. He does not say "the Lord is spirit," but "the Lord is the Spirit"; what is in view is not the person of Christ so much as His power. To identify the Lord and the Spirit without qualification, in the face of the benediction in chap. xiii. 14, is out of the question. The truth of the passage is the same as that of Rom. viii. 9 ff.: "If any man have not *the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of His. And if *Christ is in you*," etc. Here, so far as the practical experience of Christians goes, no distinction is made between the Spirit of Christ and Christ Himself; Christ dwells in Christians through His Spirit. The very same truth, as is well known, pervades the chapters in the Fourth Gospel in which Christ consoles His disciples for His departure from this world; He will not leave them orphans—He will come to them, and remain with them in the other Comforter. To turn to Christ, the Apostle wishes to assert with the utmost emphasis, is not to do a thing which has no virtue and no consequences; it is to turn to one who has received of the Father the

[1] The peculiarity of the passage has given occasion to conjectures, of which by far the most ingenious is Baljon's: Οὗ δὲ ὁ Κύριος, τὸ Πνεῦμά ἐστιν, οὗ δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα Κυρίου, ἐλευθερία: "Where the Lord is, the Spirit is; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

gift of the Holy Ghost, and who immediately sets up the new spiritual life, which is nothing less than His own life, by that Spirit, in the believing soul. And summing up in one word the grand characteristic and distinction of the new covenant, as realised by this indwelling of Christ through His Spirit, he concludes: "And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

In the interpretation of the last word, we must have respect to the context; liberty has its meaning in contrast with that state to which the old covenant had reduced those who adhered to it. It means freedom from the law; freedom, fundamentally, from its condemnation, thanks to the gift of righteousness in Christ; freedom, also, from its letter, as something simply without us and over against us. No written word, as such, can ever be pleaded against the voice of the Spirit within. Even the words we call in an eminent sense "inspired," words of the Spirit, are subject to this law: they do not put a limit to the liberty of the spiritual man. He can overrule the letter of them when the literal interpretation or application would contravene the spirit which is common both to them and him. This principle is capable of being abused, no doubt, and by bad men and fanatics has been abused; but its worst abuses can hardly have done more harm than the pedantic word-worship which has often lost the soul even of the New Testament, and read the words of the Lord and His Apostles with a veil upon its face through which nothing could be seen. There is such a thing as an unspiritual scrupulosity in dealing with the New Testament, now that we have it in documentary form, just as there used to be in dealing with the Old; and we ought to remind ourselves continually that the documentary form is an

accident, not an essential, of the new covenant. That covenant existed, and men lived under it and enjoyed its blessings, before it had any written documents at all; and we shall not appreciate its characteristics, and especially this one of its spiritual freedom, unless we put ourselves occasionally, in imagination, in their place. It is far easier to make Paul mean too little than too much; and the liberty of the Spirit in which he exults here covers, we may be sure, not only liberty from condemnation, and liberty from the unspiritual yoke of the ritual law, but liberty from all that is in its nature statutory, liberty to organise the new life, and to legislate for it, from within.

The bearing of this passage on the religious blindness of the Jews ought not to hide from us its permanent application. The religious insensibility of his countrymen will cease, Paul says; their religious perplexities will be solved, when they turn to Christ. This is the beginning of all intelligence, of all freedom, of all hope, in things spiritual. Much of the religious doubt and confusion of our own times is due to the preoccupation of men's minds with religion at points from which Christ is invisible. But it is He who is the key to *all* human experiences as well as to the Old Testament; it is He who answers the questions of the world as well as the questions of the Jews; it is He who takes *our* feet out of the net, opens the gate of righteousness before us, and gives us spiritual freedom. It is like finding a pearl of great price when the soul discovers this, and to point it out to others is to do them a priceless service. Disregard everything else in the meantime, if you are bewildered, baffled, in bonds which you cannot break; turn to Jesus Christ, as Moses turned to God, with face uncovered; put down

prejudice, preconceptions, pride, the disposition to make demands; only look stedfastly till you see what He is, and all that perplexes you will pass away, or appear in a new light, and serve a new and spiritual purpose.

Something like this larger application of his words passed, we may suppose, before the Apostle's mind when he wrote the eighteenth verse. In the grandeur of the truth which rises upon him he forgets his controversy and becomes a poet. We breathe the ampler ether, the diviner air, as we read: "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." I have kept here for *κατοπτριζόμενοι* the rendering of the Authorised Version, which in the Revised has been relegated to the margin, and replaced by "reflecting as a mirror." There do not seem to be sufficient grounds for the change, and the old translation is defended in Grimm's Lexicon, in Winer's Grammar, and by Meyer, Heinrici, and Beet. The active voice of the verb *κατοπτρίζω* means "to exhibit in a mirror"; and the middle, "to mirror oneself"—*i.e.*, "to look at oneself in a mirror." This, at least, is the sense of most of the examples of the middle which are found in Greek writers; but as it is quite inapplicable here, the question of interpretation becomes rather difficult. It is, however, in accordance with analogy to say that if the active means "to show in a mirror," the middle means "to get shown to one in a mirror," or, as the Authorised Version puts it, "to behold in a mirror." I cannot make out that any analogy favours the new rendering, "reflecting as a mirror"; and the authority of Chrysostom, which would otherwise be considerable on this side, is lessened by the fact that he seems never to have raised

the question, and in point of fact combines both renderings.[1] His illustration of the polished silver lying in the sunshine, and sending back the rays which strike it, is in favour of the change; but when he writes, "We not only *look upon* the glory of God, but also catch thence a kind of radiance," he may fairly be claimed for the other side. There are two reasons also which seem to me to have great weight in favour of the old rendering: first, the expression "with unveiled face," which, as Meyer remarks, is naturally of a piece with "beholding"; and, second, an unequivocal example of the middle voice of *κατοπτρίζομαι* in the sense of "seeing," while no unequivocal example can be produced for "reflecting." This example is found in Philo i. 107 (*Leg. Alleg.*, iii. 33), where Moses prays to God: "Show not Thyself to me through heaven or earth, or water or air, or anything at all that comes into being; nor let me see Thy form mirrored in any other thing than in Thee, even in God" (*Μηδὲ κατοπτρισαίμην ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ τὴν σὴν ἰδέαν ἢ ἐν σοὶ τῷ Θεῷ*). This seems to me decisive, and there is the less reason to reject it on other than linguistic grounds, when we consider that the idea of "reflecting," if it is given up in *κατοπτριζόμενοι*, is conserved in *μεταμορφούμεθα*. The transformation has the reflection of Christ's glory for its effect, not for its cause; but the reflection, eventually, is there.

Assuming, then, that "beholding as in a glass" is the right interpretation of this hard word, let us go on to what the Apostle says. "We all" probably means "all Christians," and not only "all Christian teachers."

[1] *Hom.* vii. on 2 Cor., p. 486, E.: Οὐ μόνον ὁρῶμεν εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκεῖθεν δεχόμεθά τινα αἴγλην.

If there is a comparison implied, it is between the two dispensations, and the experiences open to those who lived under them, not between the mediator of the old and the heralds of the new. Under the old covenant one only saw the glory; now the beatific vision is open to all. We all behold it "with unveiled face." There is nothing on Christ's part that leads to disguise, and nothing on ours that comes between us and Him. The darkness is past, the true light already shines, and Christian souls cannot look on it too fixedly, or drink it in to excess. But what is meant by "the glory of the Lord" on which we gaze with face unveiled?

It will not be questioned, by those who are at home in St. Paul's thoughts, that "the Lord" means the exalted Saviour, and that the glory must be something which belongs to Him. Indeed, if we remember that in the First Epistle, chap. ii. 8, He is characteristically described by the Apostle as "the Lord of glory," we shall not feel it too much to say that the glory is *everything* which belongs to Him. There is not any aspect of the exalted Christ, there is not any representation of Him in the Gospel, there is not any function which He exercises, that does not come under this head. "In His temple everything saith Glory!" There is a glory even in the mode of His existence: St. Paul's conception of Him is dominated always by that appearance on the way to Damascus, when he saw the Christ through a light above the brightness of the sun. It is His glory that He shares the Father's throne,[1] that He is head of the Church, possessor and bestower of all the fulness of divine grace, the coming Judge of the world, conqueror of every hostile power, inter-

[1] So Meyer, from whom the particulars in this sentence are taken.

cessor for His own, and, in short, bearer of all the majesty which belongs to His kingly office. The essential thing in all this—essential to the understanding of the Apostle, and to the existence of the apostolic "*Gospel of the glory of Christ*" (chap. iv. 4)—is that the glory in question is the glory of a Living Person. When Paul thinks of it, he does not look back, he looks up; he does not remember, he beholds in a glass; the glory of the Lord has no meaning for him apart from the present exaltation of the Risen Christ. "The Lord reigneth; He is apparelled with majesty"—that is the anthem of His praise.

I have insisted on this, because, in a certain reaction from what was perhaps an exaggerated Paulinism, there is a tendency to misapply even the most characteristic and vital passages in St. Paul's Gospel, and pre-eminently to misapply passages like this. Nothing could be more misleading than to substitute here for the glory of the exalted Christ as mirrored in the apostolic Gospel that moral beauty which was seen in Jesus of Nazareth. Of course I do not mean to deny that the moral loveliness of Jesus is glorious; nor do I question that in the contemplation of it in the pages of our Gospels—*subject to one grand condition*—a transforming power is exercised through it; but I do deny that any such thing was in the mind of St. Paul. The subject of the Apostle's Gospel was not Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth, but Christ the Lord of glory; men, as he understood the matter, were saved, not by dwelling on the wonderful words and deeds of One who had lived some time ago, and reviving these in their imagination, but by receiving the almighty, emancipating, quickening Spirit of One who lived and reigned for evermore. The transformation here spoken of is

not the work of a powerful imagination, which can make the figure in the pages of the Gospels live again, and suffuse the soul with feeling as it gazes upon it; preach this as gospel who will, it was never preached by an apostle of Jesus Christ. It is the work of the Spirit, and the Spirit is given, not to the memory or imagination which can vivify the past, but to the faith which sees Christ upon His throne. *And it is subject to the condition of faith in the living Christ that contemplation of Jesus in the Gospels changes us into the same image.* There can be no doubt that at the present time many are falling back upon this contemplation in a despairing rather than a believing mood; what they seek and find in it is rather a poetic consolation than religious inspiration; their faith in the living Christ is gone, or is so uncertain as to be practically of no saving power, and they have recourse to the memory of what Jesus was as at least something to cling to. "We thought that it had been He which should have delivered Israel." But surely it is as clear as day that in religion—in the matter of redemption—we must deal, not with the dead, but with the living. Paul may have known less or more of the contents of our first three Gospels; he may have valued them more or less adequately; but just because he had been saved by Christ, and was preaching Christ as a Saviour, the centre of his thoughts and affections was not Galilee, but "the heavenlies." *There* the Lord of glory reigned; and from that world He sent the Spirit which changed His people into His image. And so it must always be, if Christianity is to be a living religion. Leave out this, and not only is the Pauline Gospel lost, but everything is lost which could be called Gospel in the New Testament.

The Lord of glory, Paul teaches here, is the pattern

and prophecy of a glory to be revealed in us; and as we contemplate Him in the mirror of the Gospel,[1] we are gradually transformed into the same image, even as by the Lord the Spirit. The transformation, these last words again teach, is not accomplished by beholding, but while we behold; it does not depend on the vividness with which we can imagine the past, but on the present power of Christ working in us. The result is such as befits the operation of such a power. We are changed into the image of Him from whom it proceeds. We are made like Himself. It may seem far more natural to say that the believer is made like Jesus of Nazareth, than that he is made like the Lord of glory; but that does not entitle us to shift the centre of gravity in the Apostle's teaching, and it only tempts us to ignore one of the most prominent and enviable characteristics of the New Testament religious life. Christ is on His throne, and His people are *exalted and victorious* in Him. When we forget Christ's exaltation in our study of His earthly life—when we are so preoccupied, it may even be so fascinated, with what He was, that we forget what He is—when, in other words, a pious historical imagination takes the place of a living religious faith—*that victorious consciousness is lost*, and in a most essential point the image of the Lord is not reproduced in the believer. This is why the Pauline point of view—if indeed it is to be called Pauline, and not simply Christian—is essential. Christianity is a religion, not merely a history, though it should be the history told by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and the chance of having the history itself

[1] The idea of the mirror is not to be omitted, as of no consequence. It is essential to the figure: "we see not yet face to face."

appreciated for religion is that He who is its subject shall be contemplated, not in the dim distance of the past, but in the glory of His heavenly reign, and that He shall be recognised, not merely as one who lived a perfect life in His own generation, but as the Giver of life eternal by His Spirit to all who turn to Him. The Church will always be justified, while recognising that Christianity is a historical religion, in giving prominence, not to its historicity, but to what makes it a religion at all—namely, the present exaltation of Christ. This involves everything, and determines, as St. Paul tells us here, the very form and spirit of her own life.

XI

THE GOSPEL DEFINED

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we faint not: but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But and if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn *upon them*. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."—2 Cor. iv. 1-6 (R.V.).

IN this paragraph Paul resumes for the last time the line of thought on which he had set out at chap. iii. 4, and again at chap. iii. 12. Twice he has allowed himself to be carried away into digressions, not less interesting than his argument; but now he proceeds without further interruption. His subject is the New Testament ministry, and his own conduct as a minister.

"Seeing we have this ministry," he writes, "even as we obtained mercy, we faint not." The whole tone of the passage is to be triumphant; above the common joy of the New Testament it rises, at the close (ver. 16 ff.), into a kind of solemn rapture; and it is characteristic of the Apostle that before he abandons himself to the

swelling tide of exultation, he guards it all with the words, "even as we obtained mercy." There was nothing so deep down in Paul's soul, nothing so constantly present to his thoughts, as this great experience. No flood of emotion, no pressure of trial, no necessity of conflict, ever drove him from his moorings here. The mercy of God underlay his whole being; it kept him humble even when he boasted; even when engaged in defending his character against false accusations—a peculiarly trying situation—it kept him truly Christian in spirit.

The words may be connected equally well, so far as either meaning or grammar is concerned, with what precedes, or with what follows. It was a signal proof of God's mercy that He had entrusted Paul with the ministry of the Gospel; and it was only what we should expect, when one who had obtained such mercy turned out a good soldier of Jesus Christ, able to endure hardship and not faint. Those to whom little is forgiven, Jesus Himself tells us, love little; it is not in them for Jesus' sake to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things. They faint easily, and are overborne by petty trials, because they have not in them that fountain of brave patience—a deep abiding sense of what they owe to Christ, and can never, by any length or ardour of service, repay. It accuses us, not so much of human weakness, as of ingratitude, and insensibility to the mercy of God, when we faint in the exercise of our ministry.

"We faint not," says Paul: "we show no weakness. On the contrary, we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully." The contrast marked by ἀλλὰ is very instructive: it shows, in the things which

Paul had renounced, whither weakness leads. It betrays men. It compels them to have recourse to arts which shame bids them conceal; they become diplomatists and strategists, rather than heralds; they manipulate their message; they adapt it to the spirit of the time, or the prejudices of their auditors; they make liberal use of the principle of accommodation. When these arts are looked at closely, they come to this: the minister has contrived to put something of his own between his hearers and the Gospel; the message has really not been declared. His intention, of course, with all this artifice, is to recommend himself to men; but the method is radically vicious. The Apostle shows us a more excellent way. "We have renounced," he says, "all these weak ingenuities; and by manifestation of the truth commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."[1]

This is probably the simplest and most complete directory for the preaching of the Gospel. The preacher is to make the truth manifest. It is implied in what has just been said, that one great hindrance to its manifestation may easily be its treatment by the preacher himself. If he wishes to do anything else at the same time, the manifestation will not take effect. If he wishes, in the very act of preaching, to conciliate

[1] Expositors seem to be agreed that in this passage there is a reference, more or less definite and particular, to the Judaising opponents of St. Paul at Corinth. This may be admitted, but is not to be forced. It is forced, *e.g.*, by Schmiedel, who habitually reads St. Paul as if (1) he had been expressly accused of everything which he says he does not do, and (2) as if he deliberately retorted on his opponents every charge he denied. Press this as he does, and whole passages of the Epistles become a series of covert insinuations—a kind of calumnious conundrums—instead of frank and *bona fide* statements of Christian principle. The result condemns the process.

a class, or an interest; to create an opinion in favour of his own learning, ability, or eloquence; to enlist sympathy for a cause or an institution which is only accidentally connected with the Gospel,—the truth will not be seen, and it will not tell. The truth, we are further taught here, makes its appeal to the conscience; it is there that God's witness in its favour resides. Now, the conscience is the moral nature of man, or the moral element in his nature; it is this, therefore, which the preacher has to address. Does not this involve a certain directness and simplicity of method, a certain plainness and urgency also, which it is far easier to miss than to find? Conscience is not the abstract logical faculty in man, and the preacher's business is therefore not to prove, but to proclaim, the Gospel. All he has to do is to let it be seen, and the more nakedly visible it is the better. His object is not to frame an irrefragable argument, but to produce an irresistible impression. There is no such thing as an argument to which it is impossible for a wilful man to make objections; at least there is no such thing in the sphere of Christian truth. Even if there were, men would object to it on that very ground. They would say that, in matters of this description, when logic went too far, it amounted to moral intimidation, and that in the interests of liberty they were entitled to protest against it. Practically, this is what Voltaire said of Pascal.[1] But there is such a thing as an irresistible impression,—an impression made upon the moral nature against which it is vain to attempt any protest; an impression, which subdues and holds the soul for ever. When the truth is manifested, and

[1] "Il voulut se servir de la supériorité de ce génie, comme les rois de leur puissance; il crut tout soumettre, et tout abaisser par la force."

men see it, this is the effect to be looked for; this, consequently, is the preacher's aim. In the sight of God—that is, acting with absolute sincerity—Paul trusted to this simple method to recommend himself to men. He brought no letters of introduction from others; he had no artifices of his own; he held up the truth in its unadorned integrity till it told upon the conscience of his hearers; and after that, he needed no other witness. The same conversions which accredited the power of the message accredited the character of him who bore it.

To this line of argument there is a very obvious reply. What, it may be asked, of those on whom "the manifestation of the truth" produces no effect? What of those who in spite of all this plain appeal to conscience neither see nor feel anything? It is sadly obvious that this is no mere supposition; the Gospel remains a secret, an impotent ineffective secret, to many who hear it again and again. Paul faces the difficulty without flinching, though the answer is appalling. "If our Gospel *is* veiled (and the melancholy fact cannot he denied), it is veiled in the case of the perishing." The fact that it remains hidden from some men is their condemnation; it marks them out as persons on the way to destruction. The Apostle proceeds to explain himself further. As far as the rationale can be given of what is finally irrational, he interprets the moral situation for us. The perishing people in question are unbelievers, whose thoughts, or minds, the god of this world has blinded.[1] The

[1] Grammarians differ much as to the relation of τῶν ἀπίστων ("which believe not") to ἐν οἷς ("in whom"). I have no doubt they are the same. The natural way for the Apostle to express himself would have been: "it is veiled in them that are perishing, whose minds the

intention of this blinding is conveyed in the last words of ver. 4: "that the illumination which proceeds from the Gospel, the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, may not dawn upon them."

Let these solemn words appeal to our hearts and consciences, before we attempt to criticise them. Let us have a due impression of the stupendous facts to which they refer, before we raise difficulties about them, or say rashly that the expression is disproportioned to the truth. To St. Paul the Gospel was a very great thing. A light issued from it so dazzling, so overwhelming, in its splendour and illuminative power, that it might well appear incredible that men should not see it. The powers counteracting it, "the world-rulers of this darkness," must surely, to judge by their success, have an immense influence. Even more than an immense influence, they must have an immense malignity. For what a blessedness it meant for men, that that light should dawn upon them! What a deprivation and loss, that its brightness should be obscured! Paul's whole sense of the might and malignity of the powers of darkness is condensed in the title which he here gives to their head—"*the god* of this world." It is literally "of this age," the period of time which extends to Christ's coming again. The dominion of evil is not unlimited in duration; but while it lasts it is awful

god of this world blinded." But he wished to include the moral aspect of the case, the side of the personal responsibility of the perishing, as of equal significance with the agency of Satan; and this is what he does by adding τῶν ἀπίστων. Hence, though the expression is capable of being grammatically tortured into something different (the perishing becoming only *a part* of the unbelieving—so Meyer), it is, by its sheer grammatical awkwardness, exempted from liability to such rigorous treatment, and brought under the rules, not of grammar, but of common sense.

in its intensity and range. It does not seem an extravagance to the Apostle to describe Satan as the god of the present æon; and if it seems extravagant to us, we may remind ourselves that our Saviour also twice speaks of him as "*the prince* of this world." Who but Christ Himself, or a soul like St. Paul in complete sympathy with the mind and work of Christ, is capable of seeing and feeling the incalculable mass of the forces which are at work in the world to defeat the Gospel? What sleepy conscience, what moral mediocrity, itself purblind, only dimly conscious of the height of the Christian calling, and vexed by no aspirations toward it, has any right to say that it is too much to call Satan "the god of this world"? Such sleepy consciences have no idea of the omnipresence, the steady persistent pressure, the sleepless malignity, of the evil forces which beset man's life. They have no idea of the extent to which these forces frustrate the love of God in the Gospel, and rob men of their inheritance in Christ. To ask why men *should* be exposed to such forces is another, and here an irrelevant, question. What St. Paul saw, and what becomes apparent to every one in proportion as his interest in evangelising becomes intense, is that evil has a power and dominion in the world, which are betrayed, by their counteracting of the Gospel, to be purely malignant—in other words, Satanic—and the dimensions of which no description can exaggerate. Call such powers Satan, or what you please, but do not imagine that they are inconsiderable. During this age they *reign*; they have virtually taken what should be God's place in the world.

It is the necessary complement of this assertion of the malign dominion of evil, when St. Paul tells us that

it is exercised in the case of unbelievers. It is their minds which the god of this world has blinded. We need not try to investigate more narrowly the relations of these two aspects of the facts. We need not say that the dominion of evil produces unbelief, though this is true (John iii. 18, 19); or that unbelief gives Satan his opportunity; or even that unbelief and the blindness here referred to are reciprocally cause and effect of each other. The moral interests involved are protected by the fact that blindness is only predicated in the case in which the Gospel has been rejected by individual unbelief; and the mere individualism, which is the source of so many heresies, doctrinal and practical, is excluded by the recognition of spiritual forces as operative among men which are far more wide-reaching than any individual knows. Nor ought we to overlook the suggestion of pity, and even of hope, for the perishing, in the contrast between their darkness and the illumination which the Gospel of the glory of Christ lights up. The perishing are not the lost; the unbelievers may yet believe: "in our deepest darkness, we know the direction of the light" (Beet). Final unbelief would mean final ruin; but we are not entitled to make sense the measure of spiritual things, and to argue that because we see men blind and unbelieving now they are bound for ever to remain so. In preaching the Gospel we must preach with hope that the light is stronger than the darkness, and able, even at the deepest, to drive it away. Only, when we see, as we sometimes will, how dense and impenetrable the darkness is, we cannot but cry with the Apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

This passage is one of those in which the subject of the Gospel is distinctly enunciated: it is the Gospel

of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. The glory of Christ, or, which is the same thing, Christ in His glory, is the sum and substance of it, that which gives it both its contents and its character. Paul's conception of the Gospel is inspired and controlled from beginning to end by the appearance of the Lord which resulted in his conversion. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians (i. 18, 23), and in the Epistle to the Galatians (vi. 14), he seems to find what is essential and distinguishing in the Cross rather than the Throne; but this is probably due to the fact that the significance of the Cross had been virtually denied by those for whom His words are meant. The Christ whom he preached had died, and died, as the next chapter will make very prominent, to reconcile the world to God; but Paul preached Him as he had seen Him on that ever-memorable day; with all the virtue of His atoning death in it, the Gospel was yet the Gospel of *His glory*. It is in the combination of these two that the supreme power of the Gospel lies. In the distaste for the supernatural which has prevailed so widely, many have tried to ignore this, and to get out of the Cross alone an inspiration which it cannot yield if severed from the Throne. Had the story of Jesus ended with the words "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried," it is very certain that these words would never have formed part of a Creed—there would never have been such a thing as the Christian religion. But when these words are combined with what follows —"He rose again from the dead on the third day, He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father"—we have the basis which religion requires; we have a living Lord, in whom all the redemptive virtue of a sinless life and death is treasured

up, and who is able to save to the uttermost all that trust Him. It is not the emotions excited by the spectacle of the Passion, any more than the admiration evoked by the contemplation of Christ's life, that save; it is the Lord of glory, who lived that life of love, and in love endured that agony, and who is now enthroned at God's right hand. The life and death in one sense form part of His glory, in another they are a foil to it; He could not have been our Saviour but for them; He would not be our Saviour unless He had triumphed over them, and entered into a glory beyond.

When the Apostle speaks of Christ as the image of God, we must not let extraneous associations with this title deflect us from the true line of his thought. It is still the Exalted One of whom he is speaking: there is no other Christ for him. In that face which flashed upon him by Damascus twenty years before, he had seen, and always saw, all that man could see of the invisible God. It represented for him, and for all to whom he preached, the Sovereignty and the Redeeming Love of God, as completely as man could understand them. It evoked those ascriptions of praise which a Jew was accustomed to offer to God alone. It inspired doxologies. When it passed before the inward eye of the Apostle, he worshipped: "to Him," he said, "be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever." Whether the pre-incarnate Son was also the image of God, and whether the same title is applicable to Jesus of Nazareth, are separate questions. If they are raised, they must be answered in the affirmative, with the necessary qualifications; but they are quite irrelevant here. Much misunderstanding of the Pauline Gospel would have been prevented if men could have remembered that what was only of secondary importance to

them, and even of doubtful certainty—namely, the exaltation of Christ—was itself the foundation of the Apostle's Christianity, the one indubitable fact from which his whole knowledge of Christ, and his whole conception of the Gospel, set forth. Christ on the throne was, if one may say so, a more immediate certainty to Paul, than Jesus on the banks of the lake, or even Jesus on the cross. It may not be natural or easy for *us* to start thus; but if we do not make the effort, we shall involuntarily dislocate and distort the whole system of his thoughts.

In the fourth verse the stress is logically, if not grammatically, on Christ. "The Gospel of the glory of *Christ*," I say. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." Perhaps ambition had been laid to Paul's charge; "the necessity of being first" is one of the last infirmities of noble minds. But the Gospel is too magnificent to have any room for thoughts of self. A proud man may make a nation, or even a Church, the instrument or the arena of his pride; he may find in it the field of his ambition, and make it subservient to his own exaltation. But the defence which Paul has offered of his truthfulness in chap. i. is as capable of application here. No one whom Christ has seized, subdued, and made wholly His own for ever, can practise the arts of self-advancement in Christ's service. The two are mutually exclusive. Paul preaches Christ Jesus as Lord—the absolute character in which he knows Him; as for himself, he is every man's servant for Jesus' sake. He obtained mercy, that he might be found faithful in service: the very name of Jesus kills pride in his heart, and makes him ready to minister even to the unthankful and evil.

This is the force of the "for" with which the sixth verse begins. It is as if he had written, "With our experience, no other course is possible to us; for it is God, who said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But the connexion here is of little importance in comparison with the grandeur of the contents. In this verse we have the first glimpse of the Pauline doctrine, explicitly stated in the next chapter—"that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The Apostle finds the only adequate parallel to his own conversion in that grand creative act in which God brought light, by a word, out of the darkness of chaos. It is not forcing the figure unduly, nor losing its poetic virtue, to think of gloom and disorder as the condition of the soul on which the Sun of Righteousness has not risen. Neither is it putting any strain upon it to make it suggest that only the creative word of God can dispel the darkness, and give the beauty of life and order to what was waste and void. There is one point, indeed, in which the miracle of grace is more wonderful than that of creation. God only commanded the light to shine out of darkness when time began; but He shone Himself in the Apostle's heart: *Ipse lux nostra* (Bengel). He shone "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In that light which God flashed into his heart, he saw the face of Jesus Christ, and knew that the glory which shone there was the glory of God. What these words mean has already been explained. In the face of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, Paul saw God's Redeeming Love upon the throne of the universe; it had descended deeper than sin and death; it was exalted now above

all heavens; it filled all things. That sight he carried with him everywhere; it was his salvation and his Gospel, the inspiration of his inmost life, and the motive of all his labours. One who owed all this to Christ was not likely to make Christ's service the theatre of his own ambitions; he could not do anything but take the servant's place, and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord.

There is a difficulty in the last half of ver. 6: it is not clear what precisely is meant by *πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ κ.τ.λ.* By some the passage is rendered: God shined in our hearts, "that *He* might bring into the light (for *us* to see it) the knowledge of His glory," etc. This is certainly legitimate, and strikes me as the most natural interpretation. It would answer then to what Paul says in Gal. i. 15 f., referring to the same event: "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." But others think all this is covered by the words "God shined in our hearts," and they take *πρὸς φωτισμὸν κ.τ.λ.*, as a description of the apostolic vocation: God shined in our hearts, "that *we* might bring into the light (for *others* to see) the knowledge of His glory," etc. The words would then answer to what follows in Gal. i. 16: God revealed His Son in me, "that I might preach Him among the heathen." This construction is possible, but I think forced. In Paul's experience his conversion and vocation were indissolubly connected; but *πρὸς φωτισμὸν κ.τ.λ.*, can only mean one, and the conversion is the likelier.

XII

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves; *we are* pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. But having the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I speak; we also believe, and therefore also we speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things *are* for your sakes, that the grace, being multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God.

"Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 Cor. iv. 7-18 (R.V.).

IN the opening verses of this chapter Paul has magnified his office, and his equipment for it. He has risen to a great height, poetic and spiritual, in speaking of the Lord of glory, and of the light which shines from His face for the illumining and redemption of men. The disproportion between his own nature and powers, and the high calling to which he has been

called, flashes across his mind. It is quite possible that this disproportion, viewed with a malignant eye, had been made matter of reproach by his adversaries. "Who," they may have said, "is this man, who soars to such heights, and makes such extraordinary claims? The part does not suit him; he is quite unequal to it; his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." It is possible, further, though I hardly think it probable, that the very sufferings Paul endured in his apostolic work were cast in his teeth by Jewish teachers at Corinth; they were read by these spiteful interpreters as signs of God's wrath, the judgment of the Almighty on a wanton subverter of His law. But surely it is not too much to suppose that Paul could sometimes think unchallenged. A soul as great and as sensitive as his might well be struck by the contrast which pervades this passage without requiring to have it suggested by the malice of his foes. The interpretation which he puts upon the contrast is not merely a happy artifice (so Calvin), and still less a *tour de force*; it is a profound truth, a favourite, if one may say so, in the New Testament, and of universal application.

"We have this treasure," he writes—the treasure of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, including the apostolic vocation to diffuse that knowledge—"we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power [which it exercises, and which is exhibited in sustaining us in our function] may be seen to be God's, and not from us." Earthen vessels are fragile, and what the word immediately suggests is no doubt bodily weakness, and especially mortality; but the nature of some of the trials referred to in vv. 8 and 9 (*ἀπορούμενοι, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι*) shows that it would be a mistake to

confine the meaning to the body. The earthen vessel which holds the priceless treasure of the knowledge of God—the lamp of frail ware in which the light of Christ's glory shines for the illumination of the world—is human nature as it is; man's body in its weakness, and liability to death; his mind with its limitations and confusions; his moral nature with its distortions and misconceptions, and its insight not yet half restored. It was not merely in his physique that Paul felt the disparity between himself and his calling to preach the Gospel of the glory of Christ; it was in his whole being. But instead of finding in this disparity reason to doubt his vocation, he saw in it an illustration of a great law of God. It served to protect the truth that *salvation is of the Lord.* No one who saw the exceeding greatness of the power which the Gospel exercised—not only in sustaining its preachers under persecution, but in transforming human nature, and making bad men good—no one who saw this, and looked at a preacher like Paul, could dream that the explanation lay in *him.* Not in an ugly little Jew, without presence, without eloquence, without the means to bribe or to compel, could the source of such courage, the cause of such transformations, be found; it must be sought, not in him, but in God. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are." And the end of it all is that he which glorieth should glory *in the Lord.*

This verse is never without its application; and though the contempt of the world did not suggest it

to St. Paul, it may naturally enough recall it to us. One would sometimes think, from the tone of current literature, that no person with gifts above contempt is any longer identified with the Gospel. Clever men, we are told, do not become preachers now—still less do they go to church. They find it impossible to have real or sincere intellectual intercourse with Christian ministers. Perhaps this is not so alarming as the clever people think. There always have been men in the world so clever that God could make no use of them; they could never do His work, because they were so lost in admiration of their own. But God's work never depended on them, and it does not depend on them now. It depends on those who, when they see Jesus Christ, become unconscious, once and for ever, of all that they have been used to call their wisdom and their strength—on those who are but earthen vessels in which another's jewel is kept, lamps of clay in which another's light shines. The kingdom of God has not changed its administration since the first century; its supreme law is still the glory of God, and not the glory of the clever men; and we may be quite sure it will not change. God will always have his work done by instruments who are willing to have it clear that the exceeding greatness of the power is His, and not theirs.

The eighth and ninth verses illustrate the contrast between Paul's weakness and God's power. In the series of participles which the Apostle uses, the earthen vessel is represented by the first in each pair, the divine power by the second. "We are pressed on every side, but not straitened"—*i.e.*, not brought into a narrow place from which there is no escape. "We are perplexed, but not unto despair," or, preserving the relation

between the words of the original, "put to it, but not utterly put out." This distinctly suggests inward rather than merely bodily trials, or at least the inward aspect of these: constantly at a loss, the Apostle nevertheless constantly finds the solution of his problems. "Pursued, but not abandoned"—*i.e.*, not left in the enemy's hands. "Smitten down, but not destroyed": even when trouble has done its worst, when the persecuted man has been overtaken and struck to the ground, the blow is not fatal, and he rises again. All these partial contrasts of human weakness and Divine power are condensed and concentrated in the tenth verse in one great contrast, the two sides of which are presented in their divinely intended relation to each other: "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body." And this again, with its mystical poetic aspect, especially in the first clause, is reaffirmed and rendered into prose in ver. 11: "For we, alive as we are, are ever being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh."

Paul does not say that he bears about in his body the death of Jesus (*θάνατος*), but his dying (*νέκρωσις*, *mortificatio*), the process which produces death. The sufferings which come upon him daily in his work for Jesus are gradually killing him; the pains, the perils, the spiritual pressure, the excitement of danger and the excitement of deliverance, are wearing out his strength, and soon he must die. In the very same way Jesus Himself had spent His strength and died, and in that life of weakness and suffering which was always bringing him nearer the grave, Paul felt himself in intimate sympathetic communion with his Master: it was "the dying *of Jesus*" that he carried about in his

body. But that was not all. In spite of the dying, he was not dead. Perpetually in peril, he had a perpetual series of escapes; perpetually at his wits' end, his way perpetually opened before him. What was the explanation of that? It was *the life of Jesus* manifesting itself in his body. The life of Jesus can only mean the life which Jesus lives now at God's right hand; and these repeated escapes of the Apostle, these restorations of his courage, are manifestations of that life; they are, so to speak, a series of resurrections. Paul's communion with Jesus is not only in His dying, but in His rising again; he has the evidence of the Resurrection, because he has its power, present with him, in these constant deliverances and renewals. Nay, the very purpose of his sufferings and perils is to provide occasion for the manifestation of this resurrection life. Unless he were exposed to death, God could not deliver him from it; unless he were pressed in the spirit, God could not give him relief; there could be no setting off of the exceeding greatness of His power in contrast with the exceeding frailty of the earthen vessel. The use of "body" and of "mortal flesh" in these verses has been appealed to in support of an interpretation which would limit the meaning to what is merely physical: "I am in daily danger of death, God daily delivers me from it, and thus the life of Jesus is manifested in me." This is of course included in the interpretation given above; but I cannot suppose it is all the Apostle meant. The truth is, there is no such thing in the passage, or indeed in human life, as a merely physical experience. To be delivered to death *for Jesus' sake* is an experience which is at once and indissolubly physical and spiritual; it could not be, unless the soul had its part, and that the chief part, in it. To be

delivered *from* such death is also an experience as much spiritual as physical. And in both aspects, and not least in the first, is the life of Jesus manifested. Nor can I see that it is in the least degree unnatural for one who feels this to speak of that life as being manifested in his "body," or in his "mortal flesh"; it is a way which all men understand of describing the human nature, which is the scene of the manifestation, as a frail and powerless thing.

The moral of the passage is similar to that of chap. i. 3-11. Suffering, for the Christian, is not an accident; it is a divine appointment and a divine opportunity. To wear life out in the service of Jesus is to open it to the entrance of Jesus' life; it is to receive, in all its alleviations, in all its renewals, in all its deliverances, a witness to His resurrection. Perhaps it is only by accepting this service, with the daily dying it demands, that that witness can be given to us; and "the life of Jesus" on His throne may become inapprehensible and unreal in proportion as we decline to bear about in our bodies His dying. All who have commented on this passage have noticed the iteration of the name of Jesus. *Singulariter sensit Paulus dulcedinem ejus.* Schmiedel explains the repetition as partly accidental, and partly indicative of the fact that Christ's death is here regarded as a purely human occurrence, and not as a redemptive deed of the Messiah. This points in the right direction, though it may fairly be doubted whether Paul would have drawn this distinction, or could even have been made to understand it. The analytic tendency of the modern mind often disintegrates what depends for its virtue on being kept whole and entire, and this seems to me a case in point. The use of the name Jesus rather indicates that, in recalling the actual events of

his own career, Paul saw them run continually parallel to events in the career of Another; they were one in kind with that painful series of incidents which ended in the death of the historical Saviour. People have often sought in the Epistles of Paul for traces of a knowledge of Christ like that which is conserved in the first three Gospels; in this expression, *τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*, and in the repetition of the historical proper name, there is an indirect but quite convincing proof that the general character of Christ's life was known to the Apostle. And though he does not dwell on Christ's sympathy with the fulness and power of the writer to the Hebrews, it is evident from this passage that he was in sympathetic fellowship with One who had suffered as he suffered, and that even to name His human name was consolation.

In ver. 12 an abrupt conclusion is drawn from all that precedes: "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." *Ironice dictum*, is Calvin's comment, and the words are at least intelligible if so taken. The stinging passage beginning at chap. iv. 8 of the First Epistle is ironical in precisely this sense—"We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye have glory, but we have dishonour": this is as it were a variation on the theme "death worketh in us, but life in you." Still, the irony does not seem in place here: Paul writes in all seriousness that the sufferings which he endures as a preacher of the Gospel, and which eventually bring death to him—which are the approaches of death, or death itself at work—are the means by which life, in the most unqualified sense, comes to be at work in the Corinthians. If the death and life which are in view wherever the Gospel appears are to be distributed among them, the

death is his, and the life theirs; the dying of Jesus is borne about by the Evangelist, while those who accept the message he brings at this cost are made partakers in Jesus' life.

Not indeed that the contrast can be thus absolute: the thirteenth verse corrects this hasty inference. If death alone were at work in St. Paul, it would frustrate his vocation; he would not be able to preach at all. But he is able to preach. In spite of all the discouragement which his sufferings might beget, his faith remains vigorous; he is conscious of possessing that same confidence toward God which animated the ancient Psalmist to sing, "I believed, therefore I spoke." "We also," he says, "believe, and therefore also we speak." What he believes, and what prompts his utterance, we read in the thirteenth verse: "We speak, knowing that He who raised Jesus shall raise us also like[1] Jesus, and shall present us with you. With you, I say: for the whole thing is for your sakes, that the grace, having become abundant, may by means of many[2] cause the thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God."

What an interesting illustration this is of the communion of the saints! Paul recognises a spiritual kinsman in the writer of the Psalm;[3] faith in God, the

[1] Σὺν Ἰησοῦ is the true reading: sameness of kind is meant, not of time.

[2] Διὰ τῶν πλειόνων is construed in the R.V. with πλεονάσασα (so Meyer): De Wette takes it as above; in the A.V. the διὰ is made to govern τὴν εὐχαριστίαν. There is no grammatical decision certain here.

[3] The Hebrew Psalm cxvi. 10 is at this precise point practically unintelligible, but that does not justify any one in saying that the fine thought of the Apostle is utterly foreign to the original text. The open confession of God, as a duty of faith, pervades the psalm from this point to the end (the verses beginning Ἐπίστευσα διὸ ἐλάλησα make a psalm by themselves in the LXX.).

power which faith confers, the obligations which faith imposes, are the same in all ages. He recognises spiritual kinsmen in the Corinthians also. All his sufferings have their interest in view, and it is part of his joy, as he looks on to the future, that when God raises him from the dead, as He raised His own Son, He will present him *along with them*. Their unity will not be dissolved by death. The word here rendered "present" has often a technical sense in Paul's Epistles; it is almost appropriated to the presenting of men before the judgment-seat of Christ. Good scholars insist on that meaning here; but even with the proviso that acceptance in the judgment is taken for granted, I cannot feel that it is quite congruous. There is such a thing as presentation to a sovereign as well as to a judge—the presenting of the bride to the bridegroom on the wedding day as well as of the criminal to the justice—and it is the great and glad occasion which answers to the feeling in the Apostle's mind. The communion of the saints, in virtue of which his sufferings bring blessing to the Corinthians, has its issue in the joyful union of all before the throne. As Paul thinks of that, he sees an end in the Gospel lying beyond the blessing it brings to men. That end is God's glory. The more he toils and suffers, the more God's grace is made known and received; and the more it is received, the more does it cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Two practical reflections present themselves here, nearly related to each other. The first is that faith naturally speaks; the second, that grace merits thanksgiving. Put the two into one, and we may say that grace received by faith merits articulate thanksgiving. Much modern faith is inarticulate, and it is far too

soothing to be true if we say, Better so. Of course the utterance of faith is not prescribed to it; to be of any value it must be spontaneous. Not all the believing are to be teachers and preachers, but all are to be confessors. Every one who has faith has a witness to bear to God. Every one who has accepted God's grace by faith has a thankful acknowledgment of it to make, and at some time or other to make in words. It is not the faculty of speech that is wanting where this is not done; it is courage and gratitude; it is the same Spirit of faith which prompted the Psalmist and St. Paul. It is true that hypocrites sometimes speak, and that testimonies and thanksgivings are apt to be discredited on their account; but bad money would never be put in circulation unless good money was indisputably valuable. It is not the dumb, but the confessing Christian, not the taciturn, but the outspokenly thankful, who glorifies God, and helps on the Gospel. Calvin is properly severe on our "pseudo-nicodemi," who make a merit of their silence, and boast that they have never by a syllable betrayed their faith. Faith is betrayed in another and more serious sense when it is kept secret.

But to return to the Apostle, who himself, at ver. 16, returns to the beginning of the chapter, and resumes the *οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν* of ver. 1: "Wherefore we faint not." "Wherefore" means "With all that has been said in view"; not only the glorious future in which Paul and his disciples are to be raised and presented together to Christ, but his daily experience of the life of Jesus manifested in his mortal flesh. This kept him brave and strong. "We faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." The outward man covers the

same area as "our body," or "our mortal flesh." It is human nature as it is constituted in this world—a weak, fragile, perishable thing. Paul could not mistake, and did not hide from himself, the effect which his apostolic work had upon him. He saw it was killing him. He was old long before the time. He was a sorely broken man at an age when many are in the fulness of their strength. The earthen vessel was visibly crumbling. Still, that was not the *whole* of his experience. "The inward man is renewed day by day." The meaning of these words must be fixed mainly by the opposition in which they stand to οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν ("we faint not"). The same word (ἀνακαινοῦσθαι) is used of the renewal of the soul in the Creator's image (Col. iii. 10)—*i.e.*, of the work of sanctification; but the opposition in question proves that this is not contemplated here. We must rather think of the daily supply of spiritual power for apostolic service—of the new strength and joy which were given to St. Paul every morning, in spite of the toils and sufferings which every day exhausted him. Of course we can say of all people, bad as well as good, "The outward man is decaying." Time tires the stoutest runner, crumbles the compactest wall. But we cannot say of all, "The inward man is renewed day by day." That is not the compensation of every one; it is the compensation of those whose outward man has decayed in Jesus' service, who have been worn out in labours for His sake. It is they, and they only, who have a life within which is independent of outward conditions, which sufferings and deaths cannot crush, and which never grows old. The decay of the outward man in the godless is a melancholy spectacle, for it is the decay of everything; in the Christian it does not touch that

life which is hid with Christ in God, and which is in the soul itself a well of water springing up to life eternal.

But who shall speak of the two great verses in which the Apostle, leaving controversy out of sight, solemnly weighs against each other time and eternity, the seen and the unseen, and claims his inheritance beyond? "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." One can imagine that he was dictating quick and eagerly as he began the sentence; he "crowds and hurries and precipitates" the grand contrasts of which his mind is full. Affliction in any case is outweighed by glory, but the affliction in question is a light matter, the glory a great weight: the light affliction is but momentary—it ends with death at the latest, it may end in the coming of Jesus to anticipate death; the weight of glory is eternal; and as if this were not enough, the light affliction which is but for a moment works out for us the weight of glory which endures for ever, "in excess and to excess," in a way above conception, to a degree above conception: it works out for us the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart conceived, "all that God has prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9). If Paul spoke fast and with beating heart as he crowded all this into two brief lines, we can well believe that the pressure was relaxed, and that the pen moved more steadily and slowly over the contemplative words that follow: "while we look not to the things which are seen,

but to the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." This sentence is sometimes translated conditionally : "provided we look," etc. This is legitimate, but unnecessary. The Apostle is speaking, in the first instance, of himself, and the looking is taken for granted. The look is not merely equivalent to vision ; it means that the unseen is the goal of him who looks. The eye is to be directed to it, not as an indifferent object, but as a mark to aim at, an end to attain. This observation goes some way to limit the application of the whole passage. The contrast of things seen and things unseen is sometimes taken in a latitude which deprives it of much of its force : psychology and metaphysics are dragged in to define and to confuse the Apostle's thought. But everything here is practical. The things seen are to all intents and purposes that tempest-tossed life of which St. Paul has been speaking, that daily dying, that pressure, perplexity, persecution, and downcasting, which are for the present his lot. To these he does not look : in comparison with that to which he does look, these are a light and momentary affliction which is not worth a thought. Similarly, the things unseen are not everything, indefinitely, which is invisible ; to all intents and purposes they are the glory of Christ. It is on this the Apostle's eye is fixed, this which is his goal. The stormy life, even when most is made of its storms, passes ; but Christ's glory can never pass. It is infinite, inconceivable, eternal. There is an inheritance in it for all who keep their eyes upon it, and, sustained by a hope so high, bear the daily death of a life like Paul's as a light and momentary affliction. The connexion between the two is so close that the

one is said to work for us the other. By divine appointment they are united; fellowship with Jesus is fellowship all through—in the daily dying, which soon has done its worst, and then in the endless life. We may say, if we please, that the glory is the reward of the suffering; it would be truer to say that it was its compensation, truer still that it was its fruit. There is a vital connexion between them, but no one can imagine he is reading Paul's thought who should find here the idea that the trivial service of man can make God his debtor for so vast a sum. The excellency of the power which raises the earthen vessel to this height of faith, hope, and inspiration is itself God's, and God's alone.

Distrust of the supernatural, insistance on the present and the practical, and the pride of a self-styled common sense, have done much to rob modern Christianity of this vast horizon, to blind it to this heavenly vision. But wherever the life of Jesus is being manifested in mortal flesh—wherever in His service and for His sake men and women die daily, wearing out nature, but with spirit ceaselessly renewed—there the unseen becomes real again. Such people know that what they do is not for one dead, but for One who lives; they know that the daily inspirations they receive, the hopes, the deliverances, are wrought in them, not by themselves, but by One who has all power in heaven and on earth. The things that are unseen and eternal stand out as what they are in relation to lives like these; to other lives, they have no relation at all. A worldly and selfish career does not work out an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and therefore to the worldly and selfish man heaven is for ever an unpractical, incredible thing. But it not

only comes out in its brightness, it comes out as a mighty inspiration and support, to every one who bears about in his body the dying of Jesus; as he fastens his eye upon it, he takes heart anew, and in spite of daily dying "faints not."

XIII

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

"For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. Now He that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him. For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."—2 Cor. v. 1-10 (R.V.).

THAT outlook on the future, which at the close of chap. iv. is presented in the most general terms, is here carried out by the Apostle into more definite detail. The passage is one of the most difficult in his writings, and has received the most various interpretations; yet the first impression it leaves on a simple reader is probably as near the truth as the subtlest ingenuity of exegesis. It is indeed to such first impressions that one often returns when the mind has ceased to sway this way and that under the impact of conflicting arguments.

The Apostle has been speaking about his life as a daily dying, and in the first verse of this chapter he looks at the possibility that this dying may be consummated in death. It is only a possibility, for to the end of his life it was always conceivable that Christ might come, and forestall the last enemy. Still, it *is* a possibility; the earthly house of our tabernacle may be dissolved; the tent in which we live may be taken down. With what hope does the Apostle confront such a contingency? "If this befall us," he says, "we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." Every word here points the contrast between this new house and the old one, and points it in favour of the new. The old was a tent; the new is a building: the old, though not literally made with hands, had many of the qualities and defects of manufactured articles; the new is God's work and God's gift: the old was perishable; the new is eternal. When Paul says we have this house *in the heavens*, it is plain that it is not heaven itself; it is a new body which replaces and surpasses the old. It is in the heavens in the sense that it is God's gift; it is something which He has for us where He is, and which we shall wear there. "We have it" means "it is ours"; any more precise definition must be justified on grounds extraneous to the text.

The second verse brings us to one of the ambiguities of the passage. "For verily," our R.V. reads, "in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven." The meaning which the English reader finds in the words "in this we groan" is in all probability "in our present body we groan." This is also the meaning defended by Meyer, and by many scholars. But it cannot be denied that

ἐν τούτῳ does not naturally refer to *ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκήνους*. If it means "in this body," it must be attached specially to *σκήνους*, and *σκήνους* is only a subordinate word in the clause. Elsewhere in the New Testament *ἐν τούτῳ* means "on this account," or "for this reason" (see 1 Cor. iv. 4; John xvi. 30: *Ἐν τούτῳ πιστεύομεν ὅτι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ἐξῆλθες*), and I prefer to take it in this sense here: "For this cause—*i.e.*, because we are the heirs of such a hope—we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven." If Paul had no hope, he would not sigh for the future; but the very longing which pressed the sighs from his bosom became itself a witness to the glory which awaited him. The same argument, it has often been pointed out, is found in Rom. viii. 19 ff. The earnest expectation of the creation, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, is evidence that this manifestation will in due time take place. The spiritual instincts are prophetic. They have not been implanted in the soul by God only to be disappointed. It is of the longing hope of immortality—that very hope which is in question here—that Jesus says: "If it were not so, I would have told you."

The third verse states the great gain which lies in the fulfilment of this hope: "Since, of course, being clothed [with this new body], we shall not be found naked [*i.e.*, without any body]." I cannot think, especially looking on to ver. 4, that these two verses (2 and 3) mean anything else than that Paul longs for Christ to come before death. If Christ comes first, the Apostle will receive the new body by the transformation, instead of the putting off, of the old; he will, so to speak, put it on *above* the old (*ἐπενδύσασθαι*); he will be spared the shuddering fear of dying; he will not know what it is

to have the old tent taken down, and to be left houseless and naked. We do not need to investigate the opinions of the Hebrews or the Greeks about the condition of souls in Hades in order to understand these words; the conception, figurative as it is, carries its own meaning and impression to every one. It is reiterated, rather than proved, in the fourth verse:[1] "For we who are in the tabernacle groan also, being burdened, in that our will is not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life." It is natural to take *βαρούμενοι* ("being burdened") as referring to the weight of care and suffering by which men are oppressed while in the body; but here also, as in the similar case of ver. 2, the proper reference of the word is forward. What oppresses Paul, and makes him sigh, is the intensity of his desire to escape "being unclothed," his immense longing to see Jesus come, and, instead of passing through the terrific experience of death, to have the corruptible put on incorruption, and the mortal put on immortality, without that trial.

This seems plain enough, but we must remember that the confidence which Paul has been expressing in the first verse is meant to meet the very case in which this desire is *not* gratified, the case in which death *has* to be encountered, and the tabernacle taken down. "*If* this should befall us," he says, "we have another body awaiting us, far better than that which we leave, and hence we are confident." The confidence which this hope inspires would naturally, we think, be most perfect, if in the very act of dissolution the new body were assumed; if death were the initial stage in the

[1] The true rendering here is that in the margin of the R.V.

transformation scene in which all that is mortal is swallowed up by life; if it were, not the ushering of the Christian into a condition of "nakedness," which, temporary though it be, is a mere blank to the mind and imagination, but his admission to celestial life; if "to be absent from the body" were immediately, and in the fullest sense of the words, the same thing as "to be at home with the Lord." This is, in point of fact, the sense in which the passage is understood by a good many scholars, and those who read it so find in it a decisive turning-point in the Apostle's teaching on the last things. In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, they say, and indeed in the First to the Corinthians also, Paul's eschatology was still essentially Jewish. The Christian dead are *οἱ κοιμώμενοι*, or *οἱ κοιμηθέντες* ("those that sleep"); nothing definite is said of their condition; only it is implied that they do not get the incorruptible body till Jesus comes again and raises them from the dead. In other words, those who die before the Parousia have the soul-chilling prospect of an unknown term of "nakedness." Here this terror is dispelled by the new revelation made to the Apostle, or the new insight to which he has attained: there is no longer any such interval between death and glory; the heavenly body is assumed at once; the state called *κοιμᾶσθαι* ("being asleep") vanishes from the future. Sabatier and Schmiedel, who adopt this view, draw extreme consequences from it. It marks an advance, according to Schmiedel, of the highest importance. The religious postulate of an uninterrupted communion of life with Christ, violated by the conception of a *κοιμᾶσθαι*, or falling asleep, is satisfied; Christ's descent from heaven, and a simultaneous resurrection and judgment, become superfluous; judgment is transferred to the moment of

death, or rather to the process of development during life on earth; and, finally, the place of eternal blessedness passes from earth (the Jewish and early Christian opinion, probably shared by Paul, as he gives no indication of the contrary) to heaven. All this, it is further pointed out, is an approximation, more or less close, to the Greek doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and may even have been excogitated in part under its influence; and it is at the same time a half-way house between the Pharisaic eschatology of First Thessalonians and the perfected Christian doctrine of a passage like John v. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

There is no objection to be made in principle to the idea that the Apostle's outlook on the future was subject to modification—that he was capable of attaining, or even did attain, a deeper insight, with experience, into the connexion between that which is and that which is to come. But it is surely somewhat against the above estimate of the alleged change here that Paul himself seems to have been quite unconscious of it. He was not a man whose mind wrought at unawares, and who passed unwittingly from one standpoint to another. He was nothing if not reflective. According to Sabatier and Schmiedel, he had made a revolutionary change in his opinions—a change so vast that on account of it Sabatier reckons this Epistle, and especially this passage, the most important in all his writings for the comprehension of his theological development; and yet, side by side with the new revolutionary ideas, uttered literally in the same breath with them, we find the old standing undisturbed.

The simultaneous resurrection and judgment, according to Schmiedel, should be impossible now; but in chap. iv. 14 the resurrection appears precisely as in Thessalonians, and in chap. v. 10 the judgment, precisely as in all his Epistles from the first to the last. As for the inconsistency between going to be at home with the Lord and the Lord's coming, it also recurs in later years: Paul writes to the Philippians that he has a desire to depart and to be with Christ; and in the same letter, that the Lord is at hand, and that we wait for the Saviour from heaven. Probably the misleading idea in the study of the whole subject has been the assumption that the *κοιμώμενοι*—the dead *in Christ*—were in some dismal, dreary condition which could fairly be described as "nakedness." There is not a word in the New Testament which favours this idea. Where we see men die in faith, we see something quite different. "*To-day* shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." "I saw the souls of them which had been slain for the Word of God . . . and there was given them, to each one, a white robe." When Paul speaks of those who have fallen asleep, in First Thessalonians, it is with the express intention of showing that those who survive to the Parousia have no advantage over them. "Jesus Christ died for us," he writes (1 Thess. v. 10), "that, whether we wake or sleep, we may live together with Him." And he uses one most expressive word in a similar connexion (1 Thess. iv. 14): "Them also that sleep in Jesus will God *bring* [*ἄξει*] with Him." *Suave verbum*, says Bengel: *dicitur de viventibus.* May we not say with equal cogency, not only "de viventibus," but "de viventibus *cum Iesu*"? Those who are asleep are with Him; they are in blessedness with Him; what their mode of existence is

it may be impossible for us to conceive, but it is certainly not a thing to shrink from with horror. The taking down of the old tent in which we live here *is* a thing from which one cannot but shrink, and that is why Paul would rather have Christ come, and be saved the pain and fear of dying. With death in view he mentions the new body as the ground of his confidence, because it is the final realisation of the Christian hope, the crown of redemption (Rom. viii. 23). But he does not mean to say that, unless the new body were granted in the very instant of dying, death would usher him into an appalling void, and separate him from Christ. This assumption, on which the interpretation of Sabatier and Schmiedel rests, is entirely groundless, and therefore that interpretation, in spite of a superficial plausibility, is to be decidedly rejected. It is to be rejected all the more when we are invited to see the occasion which produced Paul's supposed change of opinion in the danger which he had lately incurred in Asia (chap. i. 8-10). Paul, we are to imagine, who had always been confident that he would live to see the Parousia, had come to very close quarters with death, and this experience constrained him to seek in his religion a hope and consolation more adequate to the terribleness of death than any he had yet conceived. Hence the mighty advance explained above. But is it not absurd to say that a man, whose life was constantly in peril, had never thought of death till this time? Can any one seriously believe that, as Sabatier puts it, "the image of death, with which the Apostle had not hitherto concerned himself, [here] enters for the first time within the scope of his doctrine"? Can any one who knows the kind of man Paul was deliberately suggest that fear and self-pity conferred on him an

enlargement of spiritual vision which no sympathy for bereaved disciples, and no sense of fellowship with those who had fallen asleep in Jesus, availed to bestow? Believe this who will, it seems utterly incredible to me. The passage says nothing inconsistent with Thessalonians, or First Corinthians, or Philippians, or Second Timothy, about the last things: it expresses in a special situation the constant Christian faith and hope—"the redemption of the body"; *that* is the possession of the believer (ἔχομεν); it is ours; and the Apostle is not concerned to fix the moment of time at which hope becomes sight. "Come what will," he says, "come death itself, *this* is ours; and because it is ours, though we dread the possible necessity of having to strip off the old body, and would fain escape it, we do not allow it to dismay us."

The Apostle cannot look to the end of the Christian hope without referring to its condition and guarantee. "He that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave us the earnest of the Spirit." The future is never considered in the New Testament in a speculative fashion; nothing could be less like an apostle than to discuss the immortality of the soul. The question of life beyond death is for Paul not a metaphysical but a Christian question; the pledge of anything worth the name of life is not the inherent constitution of human nature, but the possession of the Divine Spirit. Without the Spirit, Paul could have had no such certainty, no such triumphant hope, as he had; without the Spirit there can be no such certainty yet. Hence it is idle to criticise the Christian hope on purely speculative grounds, and as idle to try on such grounds to establish it. That hope is of a piece with the experience which comes when the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ

from the dead dwells in us, and apart from this experience it cannot even be understood. But to say that there is no eternal life except in Christ is not to accept what is called "conditional immortality"; it is only to accept conditional glory.

The fifth verse marks a pause: in the three which follow Paul describes the mood in which, possessed of the Christian hope, he confronts all the conditions of the present and the alternatives of the future. "We are of good courage at all times," he says. "We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from home as far as the Lord is concerned—at a distance from Him." This does not mean that fellowship is broken, or that the soul is separated from the love of Christ; it only means that earth is not heaven, and that Paul is painfully conscious of the fact. This is what is proved by ver. 7: We are absent from the Lord, our true home, "for in this world we are walking through the realm of faith, not through that of actual appearance."[1] There *is* a world, a mode of existence, to which Paul looks forward, which is one of actual appearance; he will be in Christ's presence there, and see Him face to face (1 Cor. xiii. 12). But the world through which his course lies meanwhile is *not* that world of immediate presence and manifestation; on the contrary, it is a world of faith, which realises that future world of manifestation only by a strong spiritual conviction; it is through a faith-land that Paul's journey leads him. All along the way his faith keeps him in good heart; nay, when he thinks of all that it ensures,

[1] This translation is Schmiedel's. For the use of διὰ cf. Rev. xxi. 24: Καὶ περιπατήσουσιν τὰ ἔθνη διὰ τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτῆς. It cannot mean "by" faith, in the sense of "according to" faith, or as faith directs. Nor can it be proved that εἶδος ever means "sight."

of all that is guaranteed by the Spirit, he is willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.

> "For, ah! the Master is so fair,
> His smile so sweet on banished men,
> That they who meet it unaware
> Can never turn to earth again;
> And they who see Him risen afar,
> At God's right hand to welcome them,
> Forgetful stand of home and land,
> Desiring fair Jerusalem."

If he had to make his choice, it would incline this way, rather than the other; but it is not his to make a choice, and so he does not express himself unconditionally. The whole tone of the passage anticipates that of Phil. i. 21 ff.: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh,—*if* this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I wot not. But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and to be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake." Nothing could be less like the Apostle than a monkish, unmanly wish to die. He exulted in his calling. It was a joy to him above all joys to speak to men of the love of God in Jesus Christ. But nothing, on the other hand, could be less like him than to lose sight of the future in the present, and to forget amid the service of men the glory which is to be revealed. He stood between two worlds; he felt the whole attraction of both; in the earnest of the Spirit he knew that he had an inheritance there as well as here. It is this consciousness of the dimensions of life that makes him so immensely interesting; he never wrote a dull word; his soul was stirred incessantly by impulses from earth and from heaven, swept by breezes

from the dark and troubled sea of man's life, touched by inspirations from the radiant heights where Christ dwelt. We do not need to be afraid of the reproach of "other worldliness" if we seek to live in this same spirit; the reproach is as false as it is threadbare. It would be an incalculable gain if we could recover the primitive hope in something like its primitive strength. It would not make us false to our duties in the world, but it would give us the victory over the world.

In bringing this subject to a close, the Apostle strikes a graver note. A certain moral, as well as a certain emotional temper, is evoked by the Christian hope. It fills men with courage, and with spiritual yearnings; it braces them also to moral earnestness and vigour. "Wherefore also we make it our aim"—literally, we are ambitious, the only lawful ambition—"whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him." Modes of being are not of so much consequence. It may agree with a man's feelings better to live till Christ comes, or to die before He comes, and go at once to be with Him; but the main thing is, in whatever mode of being, to be accepted in His sight. "For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The Christian hope is not clouded by the judgment-seat of Christ; it is sustained at the holy height which befits it. We are forbidden to count upon it lightly. "Every man," we are reminded, "that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." It is not necessary for us to seek a formal reconciliation of this verse with Paul's teaching that the faithful are accepted in Christ Jesus; we can feel that both must be true. And if the

doctrine of justification freely, by God's grace, is that which has to be preached to sinful men, the doctrine of exact retribution, taught in this passage, has its main interest and importance for Christians. It is Christians only who are in view here, and the law of requital is so exact that every one is said to get back, to carry off for himself, the very things done in the body. In this world, we have not seen the last of anything. We shall all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ; all that we have hidden shall be revealed. The books are shut now, but they will be opened then. The things we have done in the body will come back to us, whether good or bad. Every pious thought, and every thought of sin; every secret prayer, and every secret curse; every unknown deed of charity, and every hidden deed of selfishness: we will see them all again, and though we have not remembered them for years, and perhaps have forgotten them altogether, we shall have to acknowledge that they are our own, and take them to ourselves. Is not that a solemn thing to stand at the end of life? Is it not a true thing? Even those who can say with the Apostle, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of His glory," know how true it is. Nay, they most of all know, for they understand better than others the holiness of God, and they are especially addressed here. The moral consciousness is not maintained in its vigour and integrity if this doctrine of retribution disappears; and if we are called by a passage like this to encourage ourselves in the Lord, and in the hope which He has revealed, we are warned also that evil cannot dwell with God, and that He will by no means clear the guilty.

XIV

THE MEASURE OF CHRIST'S LOVE

"Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. We are not again commending ourselves unto you, but *speak* as giving you occasion of glorying on our behalf, that ye may have wherewith to answer them that glory in appearance and not in heart. For whether we are beside ourselves, it is unto God; or whether we are of sober mind, it is unto you. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again."—2 Cor. v. 11-15 (R.V.).

THE Christian hope of immortality is elevated and solemnised by the thought of the judgment-seat of Christ. This is no strange thought to St. Paul; many a time he has set himself in imagination in that great presence, and let the awe of it descend upon his heart. This is what he means when he writes, "Knowing the fear of the Lord." Like the pastors addressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he exercises his office as one who must render an account. In this spirit, he says, he persuades men. A motive so high, and so stern in its purifying power, no minister of Christ can afford to dispense with. We need something to suppress self-seeking, to keep conscience vigorous, to preserve the message of reconciliation itself from degenerating into good-natured indifference, to prohibit

immoral compromises and superficial healing of the soul's hurts. Let us familiarise our minds, by meditation, with the fear due to Christ the judge, and a new element of power will enter into our service, making it at once more urgent and more wholesome than it could otherwise be.

The meaning of the words "we persuade men" is not at once clear. Interpreters generally find in them a combination of two ideas—we try to win men for the Gospel, and we try to convince them of our own purity of motive in our evangelistic work. The word is suitable enough to express either idea; and though it is straining it to make it carry both, the first is suggested by the general tenor of the passage, and the second seems to be demanded by what follows. "We try to convince men of our disinterestedness, but we do not need to try to convince God; we have been manifested to Him already;[1] and we trust also that we have been manifested in your consciences." Paul was well aware of the hostility with which he was regarded by some of the Corinthians, but he is confident that, when his appeal is tried in the proper court, decision must be given in his favour, and he hopes that this has really been done at Corinth. Often we do not give people in his position the benefit of a fair trial. It is not in our consciences they are arraigned —*i.e.*, in God's sight, and according to God's law—but at the bar of our prejudices, our likes and dislikes, sometimes even our whims and caprices. It is not their *character* which is taken into account, but something quite irrelevant to character. Paul did not care for such estimates as these. It was nothing to him

[1] The φανερωθῆναι of the last judgment, ver. 10, has as good as taken place—for God.

whether his appearance made a favourable impression on those who heard him—whether they liked his voice, his gestures, his manners, or even his message. What he did care for was to be able to appeal to their consciences, as he could appeal to God, to whom all things were naked and opened, that in the discharge of his functions as an evangelist he had been absolutely simple and sincere.

In speaking thus, he has no intention of again recommending himself. Rather, as he says with a touch of irony, it is for their convenience he writes; he is giving them occasion to boast on his behalf, that when they encounter people who boast in face and not in heart they may not be speechless, but may have something to say for themselves—and for him. It is easy to read between the lines here. The Corinthians had persons among them—Jewish and Judaising teachers evidently—who boasted "in face"; in other words, who prided themselves on outward and visible distinctions, though, as Paul asserts, they had nothing within to be proud of. There are suggestions of these distinctions elsewhere, and we can imagine the claims men made, the airs they gave themselves, or at least the recognition they consented to accept, on the ground of them. Their eloquence, their knowledge of the Scriptures, their Jewish descent, their acquaintance with the Twelve, above all acquaintance with Jesus Himself—these were their credentials, and of these their followers made much. Perhaps even on their own ground Paul could have met and routed most of them, but meanwhile he leaves them in undisturbed possession of their advantages, such as they are. He only sums up these advantages in the disparaging word "face," or "appearance"; they are all on the outside; they amount to "a fair show in the flesh," but no more. He

would not like if *his* disciples could make no better boast of their master, and all the high things he has written, from chap. ii. 14 on to chap. v. 10, especially his vindication of the absolute purity of his motives, furnish them, if they choose to take it so, with grounds of counter-boasting, far deeper and more spiritual than those of his adversaries. For *he* boasts, not "in appearance, but in heart." The ironical tone in this is unmistakable, yet it is not merely ironical. From the beginning of Christianity to this day, Churches have gathered round men, and made their boast in them. Too often it has been a boast "in face," and not "in heart"—in gifts, accomplishments, and distinctions, which may have given an outward splendour to the individual, but which were entirely irrelevant to the possession of the Christian spirit. Often even the imperfections of the natural man have been gloried in, simply because they were his; and the Lutheran and Calvinistic Churches, for example, owe some of their most distinctive features to an exaggerated appreciation of those very characteristics of Luther and Calvin which had no Christian value. The same thing is seen every day, on a smaller scale, in congregations. People are proud of their minister, not for what he is in heart, but because he is more learned, more eloquent, more naturally capable, than other preachers in the same town. It is a pity when ministers themselves, like the Judaists in Corinth, are content to have it so. The true evangelist or pastor will choose rather, with St. Paul, to be taken for what he is as a Christian, and for nothing else; and if he *must* be spoken about, he will be spoken of in this character, and in no other. Nay, if it really comes to glorying "in face," he will glory in his weaknesses and incapacities; he will magnify the very

earthenness of the earthen vessel, the very coarseness of the clay, as a foil to the power and life of Christ which dwell in it.

The connexion of ver. 13 with what precedes is very obscure. Perhaps as fair a paraphrase as any would run thus: "And well may you boast of our complete sincerity; for whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we are of sober mind, it is unto you; that is, in no case is self-interest the motive or rule of our conduct." Connexion apart, there is a further difficulty about εἴτε ἐξέστημεν. The Revised Version renders it "whether we *are* beside ourselves," but in the margin gives "*were*" for "are." It makes a very great difference which tense we accept. If the proper meaning is given by "are," the application must be to some constant characteristic of the Apostle's ministry. His enthusiasm, his absolute superiority to common selfish considerations such as are ordinarily supreme in human life, his resolute assertion of truths lying beyond the reach of sense, the unearthly flame which burned unceasingly in his bosom, and never more brightly than when he wrote the fourth and fifth chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians—all these constitute the temper which is described as being "beside oneself," a kind of sacred madness. It was in this sense that the accusation of being beside himself was brought on a memorable occasion against Jesus (Mark iii. 21, ἐξέστη). The disciple and the Master alike seemed to those who did not understand them to be in an overstrained, too highly wrought condition of spirit; in the ardour of their devotion they allowed themselves to be carried beyond all natural limits, and it was not improper to speak of applying some kindly restraint. At first sight this interpretation seems

very appropriate, and I do not think that the tense of ἐξέστημεν is decisive against it.[1] Those who think it is point to the change to the present tense in the next clause, εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν, and allege that this would have no motive unless ἐξέστημεν were a true past. But this may be doubted. On the one hand, ἐξέστη in Mark iii. 21 can hardly mean anything but "He is beside Himself"—*i.e.*, it is virtually a present; on the other, the grammatical present ἐξιστάμεθα would not unambiguously convey the idea of madness, and would therefore be inappropriate here. But assuming that the change of tense has the effect of making ἐξέστημεν a real past, and that the proper rendering is "whether we *were* beside ourselves," what is the application then? We must suppose that some definite occasion is before the Apostle and his readers, on which he had been in an ecstasy (cf. ἐν ἐκστάσει, Acts xi. 5; ἐγένετο ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔκστασις, Acts x. 10), and that his opponents availed themselves of this experience, in which he had passed, for a time, out of his own control, to whisper the malicious accusation that he had once not been quite right in his mind, and that this explained much. The Apostle, we should have to assume, admits the fact alleged, but protests against the inference drawn from it, and the use made of the inference. "I *was* beside myself," he says; "but it was an experience which had nothing to do with my ministry; it was between God and my solitary self; and to drag it into my relations with you is a mere impertinence." That the "ecstasis" in question was his vision of Jesus on the way to Damascus, and that

[1] According to Winer ἐξέστη in Mark. iii. 21 has the present sense = *insanit*; and so it might be with ἐξέστημεν here. The verb occurs fifteen times in the New Testament, and except in these two passages has always the sense of being amazed or astonished beyond measure

his adversaries sought to discredit that, and the apostleship of Paul as grounded on that, is one of the extravagances of an irresponsible criticism. Of all experiences that ever befell him, his conversion is the very one which was *not* solely his own affair and God's, but the affair of the whole Church; and whereas he speaks of his ecstasies and visions with evident reluctance and embarrassment, as in chap. xii. 1 ff., or refuses to speak of them at all, as here (assuming this interpretation to be the true one), he makes his conversion and the appearance of the Lord the very foundation of his preaching, and treats of both with the utmost frankness. It must be something quite different from this—something analogous perhaps to the speaking with tongues, in which "the understanding was unfruitful," but for which Paul was distinguished (1 Cor. xiv. 14-18)—that is intended here. Such rapt conditions are certainly open to misinterpretation; and as their spiritual value is merely personal, Paul declines to discuss any allusion to them, as if it affected his relation to the Corinthians.

The strongest point in favour of this interpretation seems to me not the tense of ἐξέστημεν, but the use of Θεῷ: "it is unto God." If the meaning were the one first suggested, and the madness were the holy enthusiasm of the Evangelist, that would be distinctly a thing which did concern the Corinthians, and it would not be natural to withdraw it from their censure as God's affair. Nevertheless, one can conceive Paul saying that he was answerable for his extravagances, not to them, but to his Master; and that his sober-mindedness, at all events, had their interests in view. On a survey of the whole case, and especially with Mark iii. 21, and the New Testament use of the verb ἐξίσταμαι before

us, I incline to think that the text of the Revised Version is to be preferred to the margin. The "being beside himself" with which Paul was charged will not, then, be an isolated incident in his career—an incident which Jewish teachers, remembering the ecstasies of Peter and John, could hardly object to—but the spiritual tension in which he habitually lived and wrought. The language, so far as I can judge, admits of this interpretation, and it brings the Apostle's experience into line, not only with that of his Master, but with that of many who have succeeded him. But how great and rare is the self-conquest of the man who can say that in his enthusiasm and his sobriety alike—when he is beside himself, and when his spirit is wholly subject to him—the one thing which never intrudes, or troubles his singleness of mind, is the thought of his own private ends.

In the verses which follow, Paul lets us into the secret of this unselfishness, this freedom from by-ends and ambition: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that One died for all, therefore all [of them] died." "Constraineth" is one of the most expressive words in the New Testament; the love of Christ has hold of the Apostle on both sides, as it were, and urges him on in a course which he cannot avoid. It has him in its grasp, and he has no choice, under its irresistible constraint, but to be what he is, and to do what he does, whether men think him in his mind or out of his mind. That the love of Christ means Christ's love to us, and not our love to Him, is shown by the fact that Paul goes on at once to describe in what it consists. "It constrains us," he says, "because we have come to this mind about it: One died for all; so then all died." Here, we may say, is the content of Christ's

love, the essence of it, that which gives it its soul-subduing and constraining power: He loved us, *and gave Himself for us*; He died for all, *and in that death of His all died.*

It may seem a hazardous thing to give a definition of love, and especially to shut up within the boundaries of a human conception that love of Christ which passes knowledge. But the intelligence must get hold somehow even of things inconceivably great, and the New Testament writers, with all their diversity of spiritual gifts, are at one as to what is essential here. They all find Christ's love concentrated and focussed in His death. They all find it there inasmuch as that death was a death *for us*. Perhaps St. Paul and St. John penetrated further, intellectually, than any of the others into the mystery of this "for"; but if we cannot give it a natural interpretation, and an interpretation in which an absolutely irresistible constraint is hidden for heart and will, we do not know what the Apostles meant when they spoke of Christ's love. There has been much discussion about the "for" in this place. It is *ὑπέρ*, not *ἀντί*, and many render it simply "on our behalf," or "for our advantage." That Christ did die for our advantage is not to be questioned. Neither is it to be questioned that this is a fair rendering of *ὑπέρ*. But what *does* raise question is whether this interpretation of the "for" supplies sufficient ground for the immediate inference of the Apostle: "so then all died." Is it logical to say, "One died for the benefit of all: *hence* all died"? From that premiss is not the only legitimate conclusion "hence all remained alive"? Plainly, if *Paul's* conclusion is to be drawn, the "for" must reach deeper than this mere suggestion of our advantage: if we all *died*, in that Christ died *for* us,

there must be a sense in which that death of His is *ours*; He must be identified with *us* in it: there, on the cross, while we stand and gaze at Him, He is not simply a person doing us a service; He is a person doing us a service *by filling our place and dying our death.* It is out of this deeper relation that all services, benefits, and advantages flow; and that deeper sense of "for," to which Christ in His death is at once the representative and the substitute of man, is essential to do justice to the Apostle's thought. Without the ideas involved in these words we cannot conceive, as he conceived it, the love of Christ. We cannot understand how that force, which exercised such absolute authority over his whole life, appealed to his intelligence. We do not mean what he meant even when we use his words; we gain currency, under cover of them, for ideas utterly inadequate to the spiritual depth of his.

If this were an exposition of St. Paul's theology, and not of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, I should be bound to consider the connexion between that outward death of Christ in which the death of all is involved, and the appropriation of that death to themselves by individual men. But the Apostle does not directly raise this question here; he only adds in the fifteenth verse a statement of the purpose for which Christ died, and in doing so suggests that the connecting link is to be sought, in part at least, in the feeling of gratitude. "He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again." In dying our death Christ has done something for us so immense in love that we ought to be His, and only His, for ever. To make us His is the very object of His death. Before we know Him we are naturally selfish; we are

an end to ourselves, in the bad sense; we are our own. Even the sacrifices which men make for their families, their country, or their order, are but qualifications of selfishness; it is not eradicated and exterminated till we see and feel what is meant by this—that *Christ died our death.* The life we have after we have apprehended this can never be our own; nay, we ourselves are not our own; we are bought with a price; life has been given a ransom for us, and our life is due to Him "who died for us and rose again." I believe the Authorised Version is right in this rendering, and that it is a mistake to say, "who for our sakes died and rose again." The Resurrection has certainly significance in the work of Christ, but not in precisely the same way as His death; and Paul mentions it here, not to define its significance, but simply because he could not think of living except for One who was Himself alive.

One point deserves especial emphasis here—the universality of the expressions. Paul has been speaking of himself, and of the constraint which the love of Christ, as he apprehends it, exercises upon him. But he no sooner begins to define his thought of Christ's love than he passes over from the first person to the third. The love of Christ was not to be limited; what it is to the Apostle it is to the world: He died for all, and so all died. Whatever blessing Christ's death contained, it contains for all. Whatever doom it exhausts and removes, it exhausts and removes for all. Whatever power it breaks, it breaks for all. Whatever ideal it creates, whatever obligation it imposes, it creates and imposes for all. There is not a soul in the world which is excluded from an interest in that knowledge-surpassing love which made our death its own. There

is not one which ought not to feel that omnipotent constraint which enchained and swayed the strong, proud spirit of Paul. There is not one which ought not to be pouring out its life for Him who died in its place, and rose to receive its service.

XV

THE NEW WORLD

"Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know *Him so* no more. Wherefore if any man *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creature [or, *there is* a new creation]: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new."—2 Cor. v. 16, 17 (R.V.).

THE inferences which are here drawn depend upon what has just been said of Christ's death for all, and the death of all in that death of His. In that death, as inclusive of ours, the old life died, and with it died all its distinctions. All that men were, apart from Christ, all that constituted the "appearance" (*πρόσωπον*, ver. 12) of their life, all that marked them off from each other as such and such outwardly, ceased to have significance the moment Christ's death was understood as Paul here understands it. He dates his inference with *ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν* ("henceforth"). This does not mean from the time at which he writes, but from the time at which he saw that One had died for all, and so all died. Here, as in other places, he divides his life into "now" and "then," the Christian and the pre-Christian stage (Rom. v. 9; Eph. ii. 11-13). The transition from one to the other was revolutionary, and one of its most startling results is that which he here describes. "Then," the distinctions between men, the "appearances" in which they boasted, had been important in his eyes; "now," they have ceased to be.

He[1] never asks whether a man is Jew or Greek, rich or poor, bond or free, learned or unlearned; these are classifications "after the flesh," and have died in Christ's death *for all*. To recognise them any longer, to admit the legitimacy of claims based upon them—such claims as his opponents in Corinth seem to have been putting forth—would be to make Christ's death, in a sense, of no effect. It would be to deny that when He died for all, all died in Him; it would be to reanimate distinctions that should have been annihilated in His death.

To this rule of knowing no one after the flesh Paul can admit no exception. Not even Christ is excepted. "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more." This is a difficult saying, and has been very variously interpreted. The English reader inevitably supposes that Paul *had* known Christ "after the flesh," but had outgrown that kind of knowledge; and that he is intimating these two facts. But it is quite possible to take the words[2] as purely hypothetical: "Supposing us to have known even Christ after the flesh—a case which in point of fact was never ours—yet now we know Him so no more." Grammar does not favour this last rendering, though it does not preclude it; and however the matter may be settled, the bare supposition, as much as the fact, requires us to give a definite meaning to the words about knowing Christ after the flesh, and ceasing so to know Him.

Some have inferred from them that when Paul became a Christian, and for some time after, his conception of Christ had resembled that of the persons whom he is here controverting: his Christ had been

[1] The "we" in the first clause of ver. 16 is emphatic.

[2] As Heinrici does.

to all intents and purposes a Jewish Messiah, and he had only been able by degrees to overcome, though he had at last overcome, the narrowness and nationalism of his early years as a disciple. To know Christ after the flesh would be to know Him in the character of a deliverer of the Jews: His Jewish descent, His circumcision, His observance of the Temple worship, His limitation of His ministry to the Holy Land, would be matters of great significance; and Jewish descent might naturally be supposed to establish a prerogative in relation to the Messiah for Jews as opposed to Gentiles. Probably there were Christians whose original conception of the Saviour was of this kind, and it is a fair enough description to say that this amounts only to a knowing of Christ after the flesh; but Paul can hardly have been one of them. His Christian knowledge of Christ dates from his vision of the Risen Lord on the way to Damascus, and in that appearance there was no room for anything that could be called "flesh." It was an appearance of the Lord of Glory. It determined all Paul's thoughts thenceforth. Nothing is more remarkable in his Epistles than the strong sense that what he calls his Gospel is one, unchanged, and unchangeable. It is not Yes and No. Neither man nor angel may modify it by preaching another Jesus than he preaches. He is quite unconscious of any such transformation of his Christology as is indicated above; and in the absence of any trace elsewhere of a change so important, it is impossible to read it into the verse before us.

Another interpretation of the words would make "knowing Christ after the flesh" refer to a knowledge at first hand of the facts and outward conditions of Christ's life in this world: a knowledge which Paul

had in his early Christian days valued highly, but for which he no longer cared. There were numbers of men alive then who had known Christ in this sense. They had seen and heard Him in Galilee and Jerusalem; they had much to tell about Him which would no doubt be very interesting to believers; and more than likely some of them emphasised this distinction of theirs, and were disposed to be pretentious on the strength of it. Whether Paul had ever known Christ in this sense, it is impossible to say. But it is certain that to such knowledge he would have assigned no Christian importance whatever. And in doing so, he would have been following the example of Christ Himself. "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. And He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are." But it is impossible to suppose that this is a matter on which Paul as a Christian had ever needed to change his mind.

It is an interpretation in part akin to this which makes St. Paul here decry all knowledge of the historical Christ in comparison with the understanding of His death and resurrection. To know Christ after the flesh is in this case to know Him as He is represented in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and Paul is supposed to say that, though narratives like these once had an interest and value for him, they really have it no longer: they are not essential to his Gospel, which is constituted by the death and resurrection alone. These great events and their consequences are all he is concerned with; to know Christ after the Evangelists is merely to know Him after the flesh; and flesh, even *His* flesh, ought to have no significance since His death.

It is a little difficult to take this quite seriously, though it has a serious side. St. Paul, no doubt, makes very few references to incidents in the life of our Lord, or even to words which He spoke.[1] But he is not singular in this. The Epistles of Peter and John are historically as barren as his. They do not add a word to the Gospel story; there is no new incident, no new trait in the picture of Jesus, no new oracle. Indeed, the only genuine addition to the record is that one made by Paul himself—"the word of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." The truth seems to be that it is not natural for an apostle, nor for any inspired man, to fall back on quotations, like a preacher gravelled for lack of matter, or conscious of wanting authority. Paul and his colleagues in apostleship had Christ living in them, and recognised the spirit by which they spoke as the spirit of their Master. So far as this was the case, it was certainly a matter of indifference to them whether they were acquainted with this or that incident in His life, with this or that syllable that He spoke on such and such an occasion. One casual occurrence, one scene in Christ's sufferings, one discourse which He delivered, would inevitably be known with more exact and literal precision to one person than to another; and there is no difficulty in believing that the casual advantage which any individual might thus possess was regarded by St. Paul as a thing of no Christian consequence. Similar differences exist still, and in principle are to be disregarded. But it is another thing to say that *all* knowledge of the historical Christ is irrelevant to

[1] See the excellent section on Paul and the Historical Christ in Sabatier's *The Apostle Paul* (English Translation, pp. 76-85).

Christianity, and yet another to father such an opinion on St. Paul. The attempt to do so is due in part, I believe, to a misinterpretation of *κατὰ σάρκα*. Paul has been read as if what he disclaimed and decried were knowledge of Christ *ἐν σαρκί*. But the two things are quite distinct. Christ lived *in the flesh*; but the life that He lived in the flesh He lived *after the spirit*, and when its spiritual import is regarded, it is safe to say that no one ever knew Christ as He was *in the flesh*—the Christ of Matthew, Mark, and Luke—better than Paul. No one had been initiated into Christ's character, as that character is revealed in the story of the Evangelists, more fully than he. No one ever knew the mind, the temper, the new moral ideal of Christianity, better than Paul, and there is no ultimate source for this knowledge but the historical Christ. Paul could not in his work as an evangelist preach salvation through the death and resurrection of an unknown person; the story which was the common property of the Church, and with which her catechists everywhere indoctrinated the new disciples, must have been as familiar to him, in substance, as it is to us; and his evident knowledge and appreciation of the character embodied in it forbids us to think of this acquaintance with Christ as what he means by knowing Him after the flesh. He might have had the Gospel narratives by heart, and counted them inestimably precious, and yet have spoken exactly as he speaks here.

Nevertheless, this interpretation, though mistaken, has a certain truth in it. There *is* a historical knowledge of Christ which is a mere irrelevance to Christianity, and it has sometimes a stress laid upon it by its possessors which tempts one to speak of it in

St. Paul's scornful tone. Many so-called "Lives" of Christ abound in it. They aim at a historical realism which, to speak the plain truth, has simply no religious value. Knowledge of localities, customs, costumes, and so forth, is interesting enough; but if it should be ever so full and ever so exact, it is not the knowledge of Jesus Christ in any sense which makes a Gospel. It is quite possible, nay it is more than possible, that such knowledge may come between the soul and the Lord. It was so when Jesus lived. There were people who knew so well what He was like that they were blind to what He was. In St. Paul's phrase we may say that they knew Him "after the flesh," and it kept them from knowing Him truly. They asked, "Is not this the carpenter?" as if that were a piece of undeniable insight; and they were not conscious that only men blind to what He really was could ever have asked a question so absurd. It was *not* the carpenter who spoke with authority in the synagogues, and cast out devils, and brought in the kingdom; it was the Son of Man, the Son of God; and whether Paul meant it so or not, we may use his language in this passage to express the conviction, that one may really know Christ, to whom the whole outward aspect of His life, represented by "the carpenter of Nazareth," is indifferent; nay, that one cannot know Him in any real sense until these external things *are* indifferent. Or to put the same thing in other words, we may say that the knowledge of Christ which constitutes the Christian is not the knowledge of what He was, but of what He is; and if we know what He is, then all that is merely outward in the history may pass away.

But if none of these interpretations answers exactly to the Apostle's thought, where are we to seek the

meaning of his words? All these, it will be observed, assume that Paul knew Christ "after the flesh," subsequent to his conversion; that he shared, as a Christian, views about Christ which he is now combating. As these interpretations, however, are untenable, we must assume that the time when he thus knew Christ was *before* his conversion. He could look back to days when his Messianic conceptions were "carnal"; when the Christ was to be identified, for him, by tokens in the domain of "appearance," or "flesh"; when He was to be a national, perhaps merely a political deliverer, and the Saviour of the Jews in a sense which gave them an advantage over the Gentiles. But these days were gone for ever. "Henceforth"—from the very instant that the truth flashed on him, One died *for all*, and so *all* died—they belonged to a past which could never be revived or recalled. One died for all: that means that Christ is Universal Redeemer. That same One rose again: that means He is Universal Lord. He has done the same infinite service for all, He makes the same infinite claim upon all; there are no prerogatives for any race, for any caste, for any individual men, in relation to Him. In presence of His cross, there is no difference: in His death, and in our death in Him, all carnal distinctions die; "henceforth we know no man after the flesh." Even kinship to Jesus "after the flesh" does not base any prerogative in the kingdom of God; even to have eaten and drunk in His presence, and listened to His living voice, confers no distinction there; He has not done more for His brethren and His companions than He has done for us all. And not only the carnal distinctions of men have vanished away; the carnal Jewish conception of Christ has vanished with them.

The seventeenth verse seems a new inference from the same ground as the fifteenth. Indeed, it connects so naturally with ver. 15 that one critic has suggested that ver. 16 is spurious, and another that it was a later insertion by the Apostle. Perhaps we may assume that St. Paul, who had no fear of such critics before his eyes, was capable of setting his sentences down just as they occurred to him, and did not mind an occasional awkwardness. When he writes "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature," he is indeed drawing an inference from ver. 15, but he is at the same time generalising and carrying on the thought of ver. 16. The idea of the new creature occurs in other places in his writings (*e.g.*, Eph. ii. 10; Gal. vi. 15), but both here and in Gal. vi. 15 I prefer the rendering in the margin of the Revised Version—"If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things passed away (when he died in Christ);[1] behold, they have become new." We may say, if we please, that it is the new creature which makes the new creation; the change in the soul which revolutionises the world. Still, it is this universal change which the Apostle, apparently, wishes to describe; and in the sudden note of triumph with which he concludes—"Behold! all is become new"—we feel, as it were, one throb of that glad surprise with which he had looked out on the world after God had reconciled him to Himself by His Son. The past was dead to him, as dead as Christ on His cross; all its ideas, all its hopes, all its ambitions, were dead; *in Christ*, he was another man in another universe.

This is the first passage in 2 Corinthians in which this

[1] Observe the aorist παρῆλθεν.

Pauline formula for a Christian—a man in Christ—is used.[1] It denotes the most intimate possible union, a union in which the believer's faith identifies him with Jesus in His death and resurrection, so that he can say, "I live no longer, but Christ liveth in me." It is the Apostle's profoundest word, not on the Gospel, but on the appropriation of the Gospel; not on Christ, but on the Christian religion.[2] It is mystical, as every true word must be which speaks of the relation of the soul to the Saviour; but it is intelligible to every one who knows what it is to trust and to love, and through trust and love to lose self in another whose life is greater and better than his own. And when we have seen, even for a moment, what it is to live in self or in the world, and what to live in Christ, we can easily believe that this union is equivalent to a re-creating and transfiguring of all things.

It is impossible to point to all the applications of this truth: "all things" is too wide a text. Every reader knows the things which bulked most largely in his life before he knew Christ, and it is easy for him to tell the difference due to being in the Lord. In a sense the new creation is in process as long as we live; it is ideally that faith in Christ means death in His death; ideally that with faith the old passes and the new is there; the actual putting away of the old, the actual production of the new, are the daily task of faith as it unites the soul to Christ. We are *in* Him the moment faith touches Him, but we have to grow up *into* Him

[1] Chap. ii. 14, 17, and chap. iii. 14, are more limited.

[2] Perhaps the use of ἐν Χριστῷ here may be determined by the wish to express tacitly his opposition to those who claimed to be in a special sense τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Paul's formula really asserts a much more intimate relation to Christ than theirs.

in all things. Only as we do so does the world change all around us, till the promise is fulfilled of new heavens and a new earth.

But there is one application of these words, directly suggested by the context, which we ought not to overlook: I mean their application to men, and the old ways of estimating men. Those who are in Christ have died to the whole order of life in which men are judged "after the flesh." Perhaps the Christian Church has almost as much need as any other society to lay this to heart. We are still too ready to put stress upon distinctions which are quite in place in the world, but are without ground in Christ. Even in a Christian congregation there is a recognition of wealth, of learning, of social position, in some countries of race, which is not Christian. I do not say these distinctions are not real, but they are meaningless in relation to Christ, and ought not to be made. To make them narrows and impoverishes the soul. If we associate only with people of a certain station, and because of their station, all our thoughts and feelings are limited to a very small area of human life; but if distinctions of station, of intelligence, of manners, are lost in the common relation to Christ, then life is open to us in all its length and breadth; all things are ours, because we are His. To be guided by worldly distinctions is to know only a few people, and to know them by what is superficial in their nature; but to see that such distinctions died in Christ's death, and to look at men in relation to Him who is Redeemer and Lord of all, is to know all our brethren, and to know them not on the surface, but to the heart. People lament everywhere the want of a truly social and brotherly feeling in the Church, and try all sorts of well-meant devices to stimulate it, but nothing short

of this goes to the root of the matter. The social, in this universal sense, is dependent upon the religious. Those who have died in Christ to the world in which these separative distinctions reign will have no difficulty in recognising each other as one in Him. Society is transfigured for each of us when this union is accomplished; the old things have passed, and all has become new.

XVI

RECONCILIATION

"But all things are of God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were intreating by us: we beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin He made *to be* sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."—2 Cor. v. 18-21 (R.V.).

"Est hic insignis locus, si quis alius est in toto Paulo: proinde diligenter excutere singulas particulas convenit."—Calvin.

"IF any man be in Christ," Paul has said, "there is a new creation; he is another man and lives in another world. But the new creation has the same Author as the original one: it is all of God, who reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation." It is plain from these last words that "us" does not mean Christians in general, but in the first instance Paul himself. He is a typical example of what it is to be in Christ; he understands what his own words mean—"the old things passed away; behold, they have become new"; he understands also how this stupendous change has been brought about. "It is due to God," he says, "who reconciled us to Himself through Christ."

The great interest of this passage is its bearing upon the Christian doctrine of reconciliation, and before we

go further it is necessary to explain precisely what this word means. It presupposes a state of estrangement. Now, a state of estrangement may be of two kinds: the feeling of alienation and hostility may exist upon one side only, or it may exist upon both. What, then, is the character of that state of estrangement which subsists between God and man independently of the Gospel, and which the Gospel, as a ministry of reconciliation, is designed to overcome? Is it one-sided, or two-sided? Is there something to be put away in man only, or something to be put away in God as well, before reconciliation is effected?

These questions have been answered very confidently in different ways. Many, especially in modern times, assert with passionate eagerness that the estrangement is merely one-sided. Man is alienated from God by sin, fear, and unbelief, and God reconciles him to Himself when He prevails with him to lay aside these evil dispositions, and trust Him as his Father and his Friend. "All things are of God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ," would mean in this case, "All things are of God, who has won our friendship through His Son." That this describes in part the effect of the Gospel, no one will deny. It is one of its blessed results that fear and distrust of God are taken away, and that we learn to trust and love Him. Nevertheless, this is not what the New Testament means by reconciliation, though it is one of its fruits.

To St. Paul the estrangement which the Christian reconciliation has to overcome is indubitably two-sided; there is something in God as well as something in man which has to be dealt with before there can be peace. Nay, the something on God's side is so incomparably more serious that in comparison with it the something

on man's side simply passes out of view. It is God's earnest dealing with the obstacle on His own side to peace with man which prevails on man to believe in the seriousness of His love, and to lay aside distrust. It is God's earnest dealing with the obstacle on His own side which constitutes the reconciliation; the story of it is "the word of reconciliation"; when men receive it, they *receive* (Rom. v. 10) the reconciliation. "Reconciliation" in the New Testament sense is not something which *we accomplish* when we lay aside our enmity to God; it is something which *God accomplished* when in the death of Christ He put away everything that on His side meant estrangement, so that He might come and preach peace. To deny this is to take St. Paul's Gospel away root and branch. He always conceives the Gospel as the revelation of God's wisdom and love in view of a certain state of affairs as subsisting between God and man. Now, what is the really serious element in this situation? What is it that makes a Gospel necessary? What is it that the wisdom and love of God undertake to deal with, and do deal with, in that marvellous way which constitutes the Gospel? Is it man's distrust of God? is it man's dislike, fear, antipathy, spiritual alienation? Not if we accept the Apostle's teaching. The serious thing which makes the Gospel necessary, and the putting away of which constitutes the Gospel, is God's condemnation of the world and its sin; it is God's wrath, "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. i. 16-18). The putting away of this is "reconciliation": the preaching of *this* reconciliation is the preaching of the Gospel.

Much impatience has been shown in the criticism of this conception. Clever men have exhibited their

talent and courage by calling it "heathenish"; and others have undertaken to apologise for St. Paul by describing this objection as "modern." I cannot understand how any one should feel entitled either to flout the Apostle on this matter, or to take him under his patronage. If any one ever had the sense to distinguish between what is real and unreal in regard to God, between what is true and false spiritually, it was he; even with Ritschl on one side and Schmiedel on the other he is not dwarfed, and may be permitted to speak for himself. The wrath of God, the condemnation of God resting on the sinful world, are not, whatever speculative theologians may think, unreal things: neither do they belong only to ancient times. They are the most real things of which human nature has any knowledge till it receives the reconciliation. They are as real as a bad conscience; as real as misery, impotence, and despair. And it is the glory of the Gospel, as St. Paul understood it, that it deals with them as real. It does not tell men that they are illusions, and that only their own groundless fear and distrust have ever stood between them and God. It tells them that God has dealt seriously with these serious things for their removal, that awful as they are He has put them away by an awful demonstration of His love; it tells them that God has made peace at an infinite cost, and that the priceless peace is now freely offered to them.

When St. Paul says that God has given him the ministry of reconciliation, he means that he is a preacher of this peace. He ministers reconciliation to the world. His work has no doubt a hortatory side, as we shall see, but that side is secondary. It is not the main part of his vocation to tell men to

make their peace with God, but to tell them that God has made peace with the world. At bottom, the Gospel is not good advice, but good news. All the good advice it gives is summed up in this—Receive the good news. But if the good news be taken away; if we cannot say, God has made peace, God has dealt seriously with His condemnation of sin, so that it no longer stands in the way of your return to Him; if we cannot say, Here *is* the reconciliation, receive it,—then for man's actual state we have no Gospel at all.

In the nineteenth verse St. Paul explains more fully the way in which he is looking at the subject:[1] "to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation." The English Authorised Version puts a comma at Christ: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." It is safe to say that "God was in Christ" is a sentence which neither St. Paul nor any other New Testament writer could have conceived; the "was" and the "reconciling" must be taken together, and "in Christ" is practically equivalent to "through Christ" in the previous verse—God was by means of Christ reconciling the world to Himself. "Reconciling," of course, must be taken in the sense already explained. The sentence does not mean that God was trying to convert men, or to prevail with them to lay aside their enmity, but that He was disposing of everything that on His part made peace impossible. When Christ's work was done, the reconciliation of the world was accomplished. When men were called to

[1] This seems to be the force of ὡς: it is a violent supposition that it means "since," or "for," and that ὅτι is a marginal interpretation of it which has crept into the text.

receive it, they were called to a relation to God, not in which they would no more be against Him—though that is included—but in which they would no more have Him against them (Hofmann). There would be no condemnation thenceforth to those who were in Christ Jesus.

The connexion of the words "not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation," is rather difficult. The last clause certainly refers to something which took place after the work of reconciliation had been wrought; Paul was commissioned to tell the story of it. It seems most probable that the other is co-ordinate with this, so that both are in a sense the evidence for the main proposition. It is as if he had said: "God was by means of Christ establishing friendly relations between the world and Himself, as appears from this, that He does not reckon their trespasses unto them,[1] and has made us preachers of His grace." The very universality of the expression—reconciling a world to Himself—is consistent only with an objective reconciliation. It cannot mean that God was overcoming the world's enmity (though that is the ulterior object) it means that God was putting away His own condemnation and wrath. When this was done, He could send, and did send, men to declare that it was done; and among these men, none had a profounder appreciation of what God had wrought, and what he himself had to declare as God's glad tidings, than the Apostle Paul.

This is the point we reach in ver. 20: "We are

[1] This makes λογιζόμενος a true present, not an imperfect participle. It quite dislocates the sentence if it is co-ordinated with καταλλάσσων, and not with θέμενος.

ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were intreating you by us; we beseech you, on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." The Apostle has just told us that all is of God, but all is at the same time "in Christ," or "through Christ." Hence it is on Christ's behalf he comes forward; it is the furtherance of Christ's interests he has at heart. Nay, it is that same interest which is at the heart of the Father, who desires now to glorify the Son; so that when Paul appeals to men on Christ's behalf it is as though God Himself entreated them. Most expositors notice the amazing contrast between πρεσβεύομεν ("we are ambassadors") and δεόμεθα ("we beseech you"). The ambassador, as a rule, stands upon his dignity; he maintains the greatness of the person whom he represents. But Paul in this lowly passionate entreaty is not false to his Master; he is preaching the Gospel in the spirit of the Gospel; he shows that he has really learned of Christ; the very conception of the ambassador descending to entreaty is, as Calvin says, an incomparable commendation of the grace of Christ. One can imagine how Saul the Pharisee would have spoken on God's behalf; with what rigour, what austerity, what unbending, uncompromising assurance. But old things have passed away; behold, they have become new. This single verse illumines, as by a lightning flash, the new world into which the Gospel has translated Paul, the new man it has made of him. The fire that burned in Christ's heart has caught hold in his; his soul is tremulous with passion; he is conscious of the grandeur of his calling, yet there is nothing that he would not do to win men for his message. It would go to his heart like a sword if he had to take up the old lament, "Who hath believed our report?" In his

dignity as Christ's ambassador and as the mouthpiece of God, in his humility, in his passionate earnestness, in the urgency and directness of his appeal, St. Paul is the supreme type and example of the Christian minister. In the passage before us he presents the appeal of the Gospel in its simplest form: wherever he stands before men on Christ's behalf his prayer is, "Be ye reconciled unto God." And once more we must insist on the apostolic import of these words. It is the misleading *nuance* of "reconcile" in English that makes so many take them as if they meant, "Lay aside your enmity to God; cease to regard Him with distrust, hatred, and fear"; in other words, "Show yourselves His friends." In St. Paul's lips they cannot possibly mean anything but, "Accept *His* offered friendship; enter into that peace which He has made for the world through the death of His Son; believe that He has at infinite cost put away all that on His part stood between you and peace; *receive* the reconciliation."

The Received Text and the Authorised Version attach the twenty-first verse to this exhortation by γὰρ ("for"): "For Him who knew no sin He made *to be* sin on our behalf." The "for" is spurious, and though it is not inept the sentence gains greatly in impressiveness by its omission. The Apostle does not point out the connexion for us: in simply declaring the manner in which God reconciled the world to Himself—the process by which, the cost at which, He made peace—he leaves us to feel how vast is the boon which is offered to us in the Gospel, how tremendous the responsibility of rejecting it. To refuse "the reconciliation" is to contemn the death in which the Sinless One was made sin on our behalf.

This wonderful sentence is the inspired commentary

on the statement of ver. 15—"One died for all. It takes us into the very heart of the Apostolic Gospel. Just because it does so, it has always been felt to be of critical importance, alike by those who welcome and by those who reject it; it condenses and concentrates in itself the attraction of Christ and the offence of Christ. It is a counsel of despair to evade it. It is not the puzzle of the New Testament, but the ultimate solution of all puzzles; it is not an irrational quantity that has to be eliminated or explained away, but the key-stone of the whole system of apostolic thought. It is not a blank obscurity in revelation, a spot of impenetrable blackness; it is the focus in which the reconciling love of God burns with the purest and intensest flame; it is the fountain light of all day, the master light of all seeing, in the Christian revelation. Let us look at it more closely.

God, we must observe in the first place, is the subject. "All" is of Him in the work of reconciliation, and this above all, that He made the Sinless One to be sin. I have read a book on the Atonement which quoted this sentence three times, or rather misquoted it, never once recognising that an action of God is involved. But without this, there is no coherence in the Apostle's thoughts at all. Without this, there would be no explanation of reconciliation as God's work. God reconciled the world to Himself—made peace into which the world might enter—in making Christ sin on its behalf. What precisely this means we shall inquire further on; but it is essential to remember, whatever it mean, that God is the doer of it.

Observe next the description of Christ—"Him that knew no sin." The Greek negative (μὴ), as Schmiedel remarks, implies that this is regarded as the verdict of

some one else than the writer. It was Christ's own verdict upon Himself. He whose words search our very hearts, and bring to light unsuspected seeds of badness, never Himself betrays the faintest consciousness of guilt. He challenges His enemies directly: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" It is the verdict of all sincere human souls, as uttered by the soldier who watched His cross—"Truly this was a righteous man." It is the verdict even of the great enemy who assailed Him again and again, and found nothing in Him, and whose agents recognised Him as the Holy One of God. Above all, it is the verdict of God. He was the beloved Son, in whom the Father was well pleased. For three-and-thirty years, in daily contact with the world and its sins, Christ lived and yet knew no sin. To His will and conscience it was a foreign thing. What infinite worth that sinless life possessed in God's sight! When He looked down to earth it was the one absolutely precious thing. Filled full of righteousness, absolutely well-pleasing in His eyes, it was worth more to God than all the world beside.

Now, God reconciled the world to Himself—He made a peace which could be proclaimed and offered to the world—when, all sinless as Christ was, He made Him to be sin on our behalf. What does this mean? Not, exactly, that He made Him a sin-offering on our behalf. The expression for a sin-offering is distinct (*περὶ ἁμαρτίας*), and the parallelism with *δικαιοσύνη* in the next clause forbids that reference here. The sin-offering of the Old Testament can at most have pointed towards and dimly suggested so tremendous an utterance as this; and the profoundest word of the New Testament cannot be adequately interpreted by anything in the Old. When St. Paul says, "Him that knew no sin

God made sin," he must mean that in Christ on His cross, by divine appointment, the extremest opposites met and became one—incarnate righteousness and the sin of the world. The sin is laid by God on the Sinless One; its doom is laid on Him; His death is the execution of the divine sentence upon it. When He dies, He has put away sin; it no longer stands, as it once stood, between God and the world. On the contrary, God has made peace by this great transaction; He has wrought out reconciliation; and its ministers can go everywhere with this awful appeal: "Receive the reconciliation; Him who knew no sin God hath made sin on our behalf, and there is henceforth no condemnation to them that are in Christ."

No one who has felt the power of this appeal will be very anxious to defend the Apostolic Gospel from the charges which are sometimes made against it. When he is told that it is impossible for the doom of sin to fall on the Sinless One, and that even if it were conceivable it would be frightfully immoral, he is not disquieted. He recognises in the moral contradictions of this text the surest sign that the secret of the Atonement is revealed in it: he feels that God's work of reconciliation necessarily involves such an identification of sinlessness and sin. He knows that there is an appalling side to sin, and he is ready to believe that there is an appalling side to redemption also—a side the most distant sight of which makes the proudest heart quail, and stops every mouth before God. He knows that the salvation which he needs must be one in which God's mercy comes *through*, and not *over*, His judgment; and this is the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. But without becoming controversial on a subject on which more than on any

other the temper of controversy is unseemly, reference may be made to the commonest form of objection to the apostolic doctrine, in the sincere hope that some one who has stumbled at that doctrine may see it more truly. The objection I refer to discredits propitiation in the alleged interest of the love of God. "We do not need," the objectors say, "to propitiate an angry God. This is a piece of heathenism, of which a Christian ought to be ashamed. It is a libel on the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is love, and who waits to be gracious." What are we to say to such words, which are uttered as boldly as if there were no possible reply, or rather as if the Apostles had never written, or had been narrow-minded unreceptive souls, who had not only failed to understand their Master, but had taught with amazing perversity the very opposite of what He taught on the most essential of all points—the nature of God and His relation to sinful men? We must say this. It is quite true that we have not to propitiate an offended God: the very fact upon which the Gospel proceeds is that we *cannot* do any such thing. But it is not true that no propitiation is needed. As truly as guilt is a real thing, as truly as God's condemnation of sin is a real thing, a propitiation is needed. And it is here, I think, that those who make the objection referred to part company, not only with St. Paul, but with all the Apostles. God is love, they say, and therefore He does not require a propitiation. God is love, say the Apostles, and therefore He provides a propitiation. Which of these doctrines appeals best to the conscience? Which of them gives reality, and contents, and substance, to the love of God? Is it not the apostolic doctrine? Does not the other cut out and cast away

that very thing which made the soul of God's love to Paul and John? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that *He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*" "*God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. . . . Him that knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf.*" That is how they spoke in the beginning of the Gospel, and so let us speak. Nobody has any right to borrow the words "God is love" from an apostle, and then to put them in circulation after carefully emptying them of their apostolic import. Still less has any one a right to use them as an argument against the very thing in which the Apostles placed their meaning. But this is what they do who appeal to love against propitiation. To take the condemnation out of the Cross is to take the nerve out of the Gospel; it will cease to hold men's hearts with its original power when the reconciliation which is preached through it contains the mercy, but not the judgment of God. Its whole virtue, its consistency with God's character, its aptness to man's need, its real dimensions as a revelation of love, depend ultimately on this, that mercy comes to us in it through judgment.

In the last words of the passage the Apostle tells us the object of this great interposition of God: "He made Christ to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Our condemnation is made His; it is accepted, exhausted, annihilated, on His cross; and when we receive the reconciliation—when we humble ourselves to be forgiven and restored at this infinite cost—there is no longer condemnation for us: we are justified by our faith, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus

Christ. This is what is meant by becoming the righteousness of God in Him. It is not, as the very next sentence suggests, all that is included in the Christian salvation, but it is all that the words themselves contain. "*In Him*" has all promise in it, as well as the present possession of reconciliation, with which the Christian life begins; but it is this present possession, and not the promise involved in it, which St. Paul describes as the righteousness of God. In Christ, that Christ who died for us, and in Him in virtue of that death which by exhausting condemnation put away sin, we are accepted in God's sight.

XVII

THE SIGNS OF AN APOSTLE

"And working together *with Him* we intreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain (for He saith,

At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee,
And in a day of salvation did I succour thee:

behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation): giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our ministration be not blamed; but in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; in pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Ghost, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

"Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections. Now for a recompense in like kind (I speak as unto *my* children), be ye also enlarged."—2 Cor. vi. 1-13 (R.V.).

THE ministry of the Gospel is a ministry of reconciliation; the preacher of the Gospel is primarily an evangelist. He has to proclaim that wonderful grace of God which made peace between heaven and earth through the blood of the Cross, and he has to urge men to receive it. Until this is done, there is

nothing else that he can do. But when sinful men have welcomed the glad tidings, when they have consented to accept the peace bought for them with so great a price, when they have endured to be forgiven and restored to God's favour, not for what they are, nor for what they are going to be, but solely for what Christ did for them on the cross, then a new situation is created, and the minister of the Gospel has a new task. It is to that situation St. Paul addresses himself here. Recognising the Corinthians as people reconciled to God by the death of His Son, he entreats them not to receive the grace of God in vain. He does so, according to our Bibles, as a fellow-worker with God. This is probably right, though some would take the word as in chap. i. 24, and make it mean "as fellow-workers with you." But it is more natural, when we look to what precedes, to think that St. Paul is here identifying himself with God's interest in the world, and that he speaks out of the proud consciousness of doing so. "All is of God," in the great work of redemption; but God does not disdain the sympathetic co-operation of men whose hearts He has touched.

But what is meant by receiving the grace of God in vain, or to no purpose? That might be done in an infinite variety of ways, and in reading the words for edification we naturally grasp at any clue suggested by our circumstances. An expositor is bound to seek his clue rather in the circumstances of the Corinthians; and if we have regard to the general tenor of this Epistle, and especially to such a passage as chap. xi. 4, we shall find the true interpretation without difficulty. Paul has explained his Gospel—his proclamation of Jesus as Universal Redeemer in virtue of His dying the sinner's death, and as Universal Lord in virtue of

His resurrection from the dead—so explicitly, because he fears lest through the influence of some false teacher the minds of the Corinthians should be corrupted from the simplicity that is toward Christ. It would be receiving the grace of God in vain, if, after receiving those truths concerning Christ which he had taught them, they were to give up his Gospel for another in which these truths had no place. This is what he dreads and deprecates, both in Corinth and Galatia: the precipitate removal from the grace of Christ to another Gospel which is no Gospel at all, but a subversion of the truth. This is what he means by receiving the grace of God in vain.

There are some minds to which this will not be impressive, some to which it will only be provoking. It will seem irrelevant and pithless to those who take for granted the finality of the distinction between religion and theology, or between the theory, as it is called, and the fact of the Atonement. But for St. Paul, as for all sufficiently earnest and vigorous minds, there is a point at which these distinctions disappear. A certain theory is seen to be essential to the fact, a certain theology to be the constitutive force in the religion. The death of Christ was what it was to him only because it was capable of a certain interpretation: his theory of it, if we choose to put it so, gave it its power over him. The love of Christ constrained him "because he thus judged"—*i.e.*, because he construed it to his intelligence in a way which showed it to be irresistible. If these interpretations and constructions are rejected, it must not be in the name of "fact" as opposed to "theory," but in the name of other interpretations more adequate and constraining. A fact of which there is absolutely *no* theory is a fact which is

without relation to anything in the universe—a mere irrelevance in man's mind—a blank incredibility—a rock in the sky. Paul's "theory" about Christ's death for sin was not to him an excrescence on the Gospel, or a superfluous appendage to it: it was itself the Gospel; it was the thing in which the very soul of God's redeeming love was brought to light; it was the condition under which the love of Christ became to him a constraining power; to receive it and then reject it was to receive the grace of God in vain.

This does not preclude us from the edifying application of these words which a modern reader almost instinctively makes. Peace with God is the first and deepest need of the sinful soul, but it is not the sum-total of salvation. It would, indeed, be received in vain, if the soul did not on the basis of it proceed to build up the new life in new purity and power. The failure to do this is, unhappily, only too common. There is no mechanical guarantee for the fruits of the Spirit; no assurance, such as would make this appeal unnecessary, that every man who has received the word of reconciliation will also walk in newness of life. But if an evangelical profession, and an immoral life, are the ugliest combination of which human nature is capable, the force of this appeal ought to be felt by the weakest and the worst. "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me": can any of us hide that word in his heart, and live on as if it meant nothing at all?

Paul emphasises his appeal to the Corinthians by a striking quotation from an ancient prophet (Isa. xlix. 8): "At an acceptable time did I hearken unto thee, And in a day of salvation did I succour thee"; and he points it by the joyful exclamation:

"Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The passage in Isaiah refers to the servant of Jehovah, and some scholars would insist that even in the quotation a primary application must be made to Christ. The ambassadors of the Gospel represent *His* interest (chap. v. 20); this verse is, as it were, the answer to *His* prayer: "Father, the hour is come: glorify Thy Son." In answering the Son, the Father introduces the era of grace for all who are, or shall be, Christ's: behold, now is the time in which God shows us favour; now is the day on which He saves us. This is rather scholastic than apostolic, and it is far more probable that St. Paul borrows the prophet's words, as he often does, because they suit him, without thinking of their original application. What is striking in the passage, and characteristic both of the writer and of the New Testament, is the union of urgency and triumph in the tone. "Now" does certainly mean "now or never"; but more prominently still it means "in a time so favoured as this: in a time so graced with opportunity." The best illustration of it is the saying of Jesus to the Apostles: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." *Now*, that we live under the reign of grace; *now*, when God's redeeming love, omnipotent to save, shines on us from the Cross; *now*, that the last days have come, and the Judge is at the door, let us with all seriousness, and all joy, work out our own salvation, lest we make the grace of God of no effect.

St. Paul is as careful himself as he would have the

Corinthians to be. He does not wish them to receive the Gospel in vain, and he takes pains that it shall not be frustrated through any fault of his: "working together with God we intreat you . . . giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our ministration be not blamed." It is almost implied in a sentence like this that there are people who will be glad of an excuse not to listen to the Gospel, or not to take it seriously, and that they will look for such an excuse in the conduct of its ministers. Anything in the minister to which objection can be raised will be used as a shield against the Gospel. It does not matter that in nine cases out of ten this plea for declining the grace of God is impudent hypocrisy; it is one which the non-Christian should never have. If it is not the chief end of the evangelist to give no occasion of stumbling, it is one of his chief rules. This is a matter on which Jesus lays great stress. The severest words He ever spoke were spoken against those whose conduct made faith hard and unbelief easy. Of course they were spoken to all, but they have special application to those who are so directly identified with the Gospel as its ministers. It is to them men naturally look for the proof of what grace does. If its reception has been in vain in them; if they have not learned the spirit of their message; if their pride, or indolence, or avarice, or ill-nature, provoke the anger or contempt of those to whom they preach,—then their ministration is blamed, and the shadow of that censure falls upon their message. The grace of God which has to be proclaimed through human lips, and to attest itself by its power over human lives, might seem to be put in this way to too great hazard in the world; but it has God behind it, or rather it is itself God at work in His ministers as

their humility and fidelity allow Him; and in spite of the occasions of stumbling for which there is no excuse, God is always able to make grace prevail. Through the faults of its ministers, nay, sometimes even with those faults as a foil, men see how good and how strong that grace is.

It is not easy to comment on the glowing passage (vv. 4-10) in which St. Paul expands this sober habit of giving no occasion of stumbling in anything into a description of his apostolic ministry. Logically, its value is obvious enough. He means the Corinthians to feel that if they turn away from the Gospel which he has preached to them they are passing censure lightly on a life of unparalleled devotion and power. He commends himself to them, as God's servants ought always to do,[1] by the life which he leads in the exercise of his ministry; and to reject his Gospel is to condemn his life as worthless or misspent. Will they venture to do that when they are reminded of what it is, and when they feel that it is all this for them? No right-minded man will, without provocation, speak about himself, but Paul is doubly protected. He *is* challenged, by the threatened desertion from the Gospel of some, at least, of the Corinthians; and it is not so much of himself he speaks, as of the ministers of Christ; not so much on his own behalf, as on behalf of the Gospel. The fountains of the great deep are broken up within him as he thinks of what is at issue; he is in all straits, as he begins, and can speak only in unconnected words, one at a time; but before he stops he has won his liberty, and pours out his soul without restraint.

It is needless to comment on each of the eight-and

[1] Observe that it is ὡς Θεοῦ διάκονοι, not διακόνους.

twenty separate phrases in which St. Paul characterises his life as a minister of the Gospel. But there are what might be called breathing-places, if not logical pauses, in the outburst of feeling, and these, as it happens, coincide with the introduction of new aspects of his work. (1) At first he depicts exclusively, and in single words, its passive side. Christ had shown him at his conversion how great things he must suffer for His name's sake (Acts ix. 16), and here is his own confirmation of the Lord's word: he has ministered "in much patience—in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses; in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults"—where the enmity of men was conspicuous; "in labours, in watchings, in fastings"—freely exacted by his own devotion. These nine words are all, in a manner, subordinated to "much patience"; his brave endurance was abundantly shown in every variety of pain and distress. (2) At ver. 6 he makes a new start, and now it is not the passive and physical aspect of his work that is in view, but the active and spiritual. All that weight of suffering did not extinguish in him the virtues of the new life, or the special gifts of the Christian minister. He wrought, he reminds them, "in purity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God." The precise import of some of these expressions may be doubtful, but this is of less consequence than the general tenor of the whole, which is unmistakable. Probably some of the terms, strictly taken, would cross each other. Thus the Holy Spirit and the power of God, if we compare such passages as 1 Cor. ii. 4, 1 Thess. i. 5, are very nearly akin. The same remark would apply to "knowledge," and to "the word of truth," if the latter

refers, as I cannot but think it does,[1] to the Gospel. "Purity" is naturally taken in the widest sense, and "undissembled love" is peculiarly appropriate when we think of the feelings with which some of the Corinthians regarded Paul. But the main thing to notice is how the "much endurance," which, to a superficial observer, is the most conspicuous characteristic of the Apostle's ministry, is balanced by a great manifestation of spiritual force from within. Of all men in the world he was the weakest to look at, the most battered, burdened, and depressed, yet no one else had in him such a fountain as he of the most powerful and gracious life. And then (3) after another pause, marked this time by a slight change in the construction (from ἐν to διὰ), he goes on to enlarge upon the whole conditions under which his ministry is fulfilled, and especially on the extraordinary contrasts which are reconciled in it. We commend ourselves in our work, he says, "by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet coming to be well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowing, yet ever rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Here again it is not the details that are important, but the whole, and yet the details require notice. The armour of righteousness is that which righteousness supplies, or it may even be that which righteousness is: Paul's character equips him right and left; it is both spear and shield, and makes him competent either for attack or defence. Without

[1] Some, because of the want of the article, make it equivalent to "veracity."

righteousness, in this sense of integrity, he could not commend himself in his work as a minister of God.[1] But not only does his real character commend him; his reputation does the same service, however various that reputation may be. Through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report—through the truth that is told about him, and through the lies—through the esteem of his friends, the malignity of his enemies, the contempt of strangers—the same man comes out, in the same character, devoted always in the same spirit to the same calling. It is indeed his very devotion which produces these opposite estimates, and hence, inconsistent as they are, they agree in recommending him as a servant of God. Some said "He is beside himself," and others would have plucked out their eyes for his sake, yet both these extremely opposite attitudes were produced by the very same thing—the passionate earnestness with which he served Christ in the Gospel. There are good scholars who think that the clauses beginning "as deceivers, and true," are the Apostle's own commentary on "through evil report and good report"; in other words, that in these clauses he is giving samples of the way in which he was spoken of, to his honour or dishonour, and glorying that honour and dishonour alike only guaranteed more thoroughly his claim to be a minister of God. This might suit the first two pairs of contrasts ("as deceivers, and true; as unknown, and gaining recognition"), but it does not suit the next ("as dying, and behold we live"), in which, as in those that follow, the Apostle is not repeating what was said by others, but speaking for himself, and stating truth equally on both sides of the account.

[1] Beet, however, takes it in the technical sense: justification by faith is the preacher's sword and shield.

After the first pair, there is no "dishonour," or "evil report," in any of the states which he contrasts with each other: though opposites, they have each their truth, and the power and beauty of the passage, and of the life which it describes, lie simply in this, that both *are* true, and that through all such contrasts St. Paul can prove himself the same loyal minister of the reconciliation.

Each pair of opposites might furnish by itself a subject for discourse, but what we are rather concerned with is the impression produced by the whole. In their variety they give us a vivid idea of the range of St. Paul's experiences; in the regularity with which he puts the higher last, and in the climax with which he concludes, they show the victorious spirit with which he confronted all that various life. An ordinary Christian—an ordinary minister of the Gospel—may well feel, as he reads, that his own life is by comparison empty and commonplace. There is not that terrible pressure on him from without; there is not that irrepressible fountain of grace within; there is not that triumphant spirit which can subdue all the world contains—honour and dishonour, evil report and good report—and make it pay tribute to the Gospel, and to himself as a Gospel minister. Yet the world has still all possible experiences ready for those who give themselves to the service of God with the wholeheartedness of Paul: it will show them its best and its worst; its reverence, affection, and praise; its hatred, its indifference, its scorn. And it is in the facing of all such experiences by God's ministers that the ministry receives its highest attestation: they are enabled to turn all to profit; in ignominy and in honour alike they are made more than conquerors through Him

who loved them. St. Paul's plea rises involuntarily into a pæan; he begins, as we saw, with the embarrassed tone of a man who wishes to persuade others that he has taken sincere pains not to frustrate his work by faults he could have avoided—"giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that the ministry be not blamed"; but he is carried higher and higher, as the tide of feeling rises within him, till it sets him beyond the reach of blame or praise—at Christ's right hand, where all things are his. Here is a signal fulfilment of that word of the Lord: "I am come that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly." Who could have it more abundantly, more triumphantly strong through all its vicissitudes, than the man who dictated these lines?

The passage closes with an appeal in which Paul descends from this supreme height to the most direct and affectionate address. He names his readers by name: "Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians;[1] our heart is enlarged." He means that he has treated them with the utmost frankness and cordiality. With strangers we use reserve; we do not let ourselves go, nor indulge in any effusion of heart. But he has not made strangers of them; he has relieved his overcharged heart before them, and he has established a new claim on their confidence in doing so. "Ye are not straitened in us," he writes; that is, "The awkwardness and constraint of which you are conscious in your relations with me are not due to anything on my side; my heart has been made wide, and you have plenty of room in it. But you are straitened in your own affections. It is *your* hearts that are narrow: cramped

[1] *Rara et præsentissima appellatio* (Bengel).

and confined with unworthy suspicions, and with the feeling that you have done me a wrong which you are not quite prepared to rectify. Overcome these ungenerous thoughts at once. Give me a recompense in kind for my treatment of you. I have opened my heart wide, to you and for you; open your hearts as freely, to me and for me. I am your father in Christ, and I have a right to this from my children."

When we take this passage as a whole, in its original bearings, one thing is plain: that want of love and confidence between the minister of the Gospel and those to whom he ministers has great power to frustrate the grace of God. There may have been a real revival under the minister's preaching—a real reception of the grace which he proclaims—but all will be in vain if mutual confidence fails. If he gives occasion of stumbling in something, and the ministry is blamed; or if malice and falsehood sow the seeds of dissension between him and his brethren, the grand condition of an effective ministry is gone. "Beloved, let us love one another," if we do not wish the virtue of the Cross to be of no effect in us.

XVIII

NEW TESTAMENT PURITANISM

"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore

Come ye out from among hem, and be ye separate,
saith the Lord,
And touch no unclean thing;
And I will receive you,
And will be to you a Father,
And ye shall be to Me sons and daughters,
saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—2 Cor. vi. 14-vii. 1 (R.V.).

THIS is one of the most peculiar passages in the New Testament. Even a careless reader must feel that there is something abrupt and unexpected in it; it jolts the mind as a stone on the road does a carriage wheel. Paul has been begging the Corinthians to treat him with the same love and confidence which he has always shown to them, and he urges this claim upon them up to ver. 13. Then comes this passage about the relation of Christians to the world. Then again, at chap. vii. 2—"Open your hearts to us; we wronged no man, we corrupted no man, we took

advantage of no man"—he returns to the old subject without the least mark of transition. If everything were omitted from chap. vi. 14 to chap. vii. 1 inclusive, the continuity both of thought and feeling would be much more striking. This consideration alone has induced many scholars to believe that these verses do not occupy their original place. The ingenious suggestion has been made that they are a fragment of the letter to which the Apostle refers in the First Epistle (chap. v. 9): the sentiment, and to some extent even the words, favour this conjecture. But as there is no external authority for any conjecture whatever, and no variation in the text, such suggestions can never become conclusive. It is always possible that, on reading over his letter, the Apostle himself may have inserted a paragraph breaking to some extent the closeness of the original connexion. If there is nothing in the contents of the section inconsistent with his mind, the breach of continuity is not enough to discredit it.

Some, however, have gone further than this. They have pointed to the strange formulæ of quotation—"as God said," "saith the Lord," "saith the Lord Almighty"—as unlike Paul. Even the main idea of the passage—"touch not any unclean thing"—is asserted to be at variance with his principles. A narrow Jewish Christian might, it is said, have expressed this shrinking from what is unclean, in the sense of being associated with idolatry, but not the great Apostle of liberty. At all events he would have taken care, in giving such an advice under special circumstances, to safeguard the principle of freedom. And, finally, an argument is drawn from language. The only point at which it is even plausible is that which touches upon the use

of the terms "flesh" and "spirit" in chap. vii. 1. Schmiedel, who has an admirable excursus on the whole question, decides that this, and this only, is certainly un-Pauline. It is certainly unusual in Paul, but I do not think we can say more. The "rigour and vigour" with which Paul's use of these terms is investigated seems to me largely misplaced. They did undoubtedly tend to become technical in his mind, but words so universally and so vaguely used could never become simply technical. If any contemporary of Paul could have written, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit," then Paul himself could have written it. Language offers the same latitudes and liberties to everybody, and one could not imagine a subject which tempted less to technicality than the one urged in these verses. Whatever the explanation of their apparently irrelevant insertion here, I can see nothing in them alien to Paul. Puritanism is certainly more akin to the Old Testament than to the New, and that may explain the instinctiveness with which the writer seems to turn to the law and the prophets, and the abundance of his quotations; but though "all things are lawful" to the Christian, Puritanism has a place in the New Testament too. There is no conception of "holiness" into which the idea of "separation" does not enter; and though the balance of elements may vary in the New Testament as compared with the Old, none can be wanting. From this point of view we can best examine the meaning and application of the passage. If a connexion is craved, the best, I think, is that furnished by a combination of Calvin and Meyer. *Quasi recuperata auctoritate*, says Calvin, *liberius jam eos objurgat*: this supplies a link of feeling between vv. 13 and 14. A link of thought

is supplied if we consider with Meyer that inattention to the rule of life here laid down was a notable cause of receiving the grace of God in vain (ver. 1).[1] Let us notice (1) the moral demand of the passage; (2) the assumption on which it rests; (3) the Divine promise which inspires its observance.

(1) The moral demand is first put in the negative form: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." The peculiar word ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ("unequally yoked") has a cognate form in Lev. xix. 19, in the law which forbids the breeding of hybrid animals. God has established a good physical order in the world, and it is not to be confounded and disfigured by the mixing of species. It is that law (or perhaps another form of it in Deut. xxii. 10, forbidding an Israelite to plough with an ox and an ass under the same yoke) that is applied in an ethical sense in this passage. There is a wholesome moral order in the world also, and it is not to be confused by the association of its different kinds. The common application of this text to the marriage of Christians and non-Christians is legitimate, but too narrow. The text prohibits every kind of union in which the separate character and interest of the Christian lose anything of their distinctiveness and integrity.

[1] An ingenious defence of the place of these verses has been made by Godet in his Introduction to St. Paul's Epistles. At chap. vi. 10 the Apostle suddenly stops, amazed, as it were, at himself and at what the Spirit has just dictated to him. His heart swells, and he longs to embrace the thankless Church to which he writes. What *can* be the cause of its ingratitude? It is this. He has inexorably exacted from them a sacrifice claimed by their Christian profession—abstinence from banquets, etc., in idol temples (1 Cor. x.). But he has had no choice; the promises God makes to His sons and daughters are made on condition of such separation. Hence the entreaty in vii. 2 f., "Make room for me in your hearts: I have not deserved ill of any one by what I have done."—*Introduction*, p. 381.

This is brought out more strongly in the free quotation from Isa. lii. 11 in ver. 17: "Come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not anything unclean." These words were originally addressed to the priests who, on the redemption of Israel from Babylon, were to carry the sacred temple vessels back to Jerusalem. But we must remember that, though they are Old Testament words, they are quoted by a New Testament writer, who inevitably puts his own meaning into them. "The unclean thing" which no Christian is to touch is not to be taken in a precise Levitical sense; it covers, and I have no doubt was intended by the writer to cover, all that it suggests to any simple Christian mind now. We are to have no compromising connexion with anything in the world which is alien to God. Let us be as loving and conciliatory as we please, but as long as the world is what it is, the Christian life can only maintain itself in it in an attitude of protest. There always will be things and people to whom the Christian has to say No!

But the moral demand of the passage is put in a more positive form in the last verse: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." That is the ideal of the Christian life. There is something to be overcome and put away; there is something to be wrought out and completed; there is a spiritual element or atmosphere—the fear of God—in which alone these tasks can be accomplished. The fear of God is an Old Testament name for true religion, and even under the New Testament it holds its place. The Seraphim still veil their faces while they cry "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts," and still we must feel that great awe descend upon our hearts if we would be partakers

of His holiness. It is this which withers up sin to the root, and enables us to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit. St. Paul includes himself in his exhortation here: it is one duty, one ideal, which is set before all. The prompt decisive side of it is represented in *καθαρίσωμεν* ("let us cleanse": observe the aorist); its patient laborious side in *ἐπιτελοῦντες ἁγιωσύνην* ("carrying holiness to completion)." Almost everybody in a Christian Church makes a beginning with this task: we cleanse ourselves from obvious and superficial defilements; but how few carry the work on into the spirit, how few carry it on ceaselessly towards perfection. As year after year rolls by, as the various experiences of life come to us with their lessons and their discipline from God, as we see the lives of others, here sinking ever deeper and deeper into the corruptions of the world, there rising daily nearer and nearer to the perfect holiness which is their goal, does not this demand assert its power over us? Is it not a great thing, a worthy thing, that we should set ourselves to purge away from our whole nature, outward and inward, whatever cannot abide the holy eye of God; and that we should regard Christian holiness, not as a subject for casual thoughts once a week, but as the task to be taken up anew, with unwearying diligence, every day we live? Let us be in earnest with this, for surely God is in earnest.

(2) Observe now the assumption on which the demand not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers is based. It is that there are *two* ethical or spiritual interests in the world, and that these are fundamentally inconsistent with each other. This implies that in choosing the one, the other has to be rejected. But it implies more: it implies that at bottom there are only two

kinds of people in the world—those who identify themselves with the one of these interests, and those who identify themselves with the other.

Now, as long as this is kept in an abstract form people do not quarrel with it. They have no objection to admit that good and evil are the only spiritual forces in the world, and that they are mutually exclusive. But many will not admit that there are only two kinds of persons in the world, answering to these two forces. They would rather say there is only *one* kind of persons, in whom these forces are with infinite varieties and modifications combined. This seems more tolerant, more humane, more capable of explaining the amazing mixtures and inconsistencies we see in human lives. But it is not more true. It is a more penetrating insight which judges that every man—despite his range of neutrality—would in the last resort choose his side; would, in short, in a crisis of the proper kind, prove finally that he was not good *and* bad, but good *or* bad. We cannot pretend to judge others, but sometimes men udge themselves, and always God can judge. And there is an instinct in those who are perfecting holiness in the fear of God which tells them, without in the least making them Pharisaical, not only what things, but what persons—not only what ideas and practices, but what individual characters—are not to be made friends of. It is no pride, or scorn, or censoriousness, which speaks thus, but the voice of all Christian experience. It is recognised at once where the young are concerned: people are careful of the friends their children make, and a schoolmaster will dismiss inexorably, not only a bad habit, but a bad boy, from the school. It ought to be recognised just as easily in maturity as in childhood: there are men and women,

as well as boys and girls, who distinctly represent evil, and whose society is to be declined. To protest against them, to repel them, to resent their life and conduct as morally offensive, is a Christian duty; it is the first step towards evangelising them.

It is worth noticing in the passage before us how the Apostle, starting from abstract ideas, descends, as he becomes more urgent, into personal relations. What fellowship have righteousness and lawlessness? None. What communion has light with darkness? None. What concord has Christ with Belial? Here the persons come in who are the heads, or representatives, of the opposing moral interests, and it is only now that we feel the completeness of the antagonism. The interest of holiness is gathered up in Christ; the interest of evil in the great adversary; and they have nothing in common. And so with the believer and the unbeliever. Of course there is ground on which they can meet: the same sun shines on them, the same soil supports them, they breathe the same air. But in all that is indicated by those two names—believer and unbeliever—they stand quite apart; and the distinction thus indicated reaches deeper than any bond of union. It is not denied that the unbeliever may have much that is admirable about him; but for the believer the one supremely important thing in the world is that which the unbeliever denies, and therefore the more he is in earnest the less can he afford the unbeliever's friendship. We need all the help we can get to fight the good fight of faith, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God; and a friend whose silence numbs faith, or whose words trouble it, is a friend no earnest Christian dare keep. Words like these would not seem so hard if the common faith of Christians were felt to be

a real bond of union among them, and if the recoil from the unbelieving world were seen to be the action of the whole Christian society, the instinct of self-preservation in the new Christian life. But, at whatever risk of seeming harsh, it must be repeated that there has never been a state of affairs in the world in which the commandment had no meaning, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate"; nor an obedience to this commandment which did not involve separation from persons as well as from principles.

(3) But what bulks most largely in the passage is the series of divine promises which are to inspire and sustain obedience. The separations which an earnest Christian life requires are not without their compensation; to leave the world is to be welcomed by God. It is probable that the pernicious association which the writer had immediately in view was association with the heathen in their worship, or at least in their sacrificial feasts. At all events it is the inconsistency of this with the worship of the true God that forms the climax of his expostulation—What agreement hath a temple of God with idols? and it is to this, again, that the encouraging promises are attached. "*We*," says the Apostle, "are a temple of the living God." This carries with it all that he has claimed: for a temple means a house in which God dwells, and God can only dwell in a holy place. Pagans and Jews alike recognised the sanctity of their temples: nothing was guarded more jealously; nothing, if violated, was more promptly and terribly avenged. Paul had seen the day when he gave his vote to shed the blood of a man who had spoken disrespectfully of the Temple at Jerusalem, and the day was coming when he himself was to run the risk of his life on the mere suspicion that he had taken

a pagan into the holy place. He expects Christians to be as much in earnest as Jews to keep the sanctity of God's house inviolate; and now, he says, that house are we: it is ourselves we have to keep unspotted from the world.

We are God's temple in accordance with the central promise of the old covenant: as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." The original of this is Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. The Apostle, as has been observed already, takes the Old Testament words in a New Testament sense: as they stand here in Second Corinthians they mean something much more intimate and profound than in their old place in Leviticus. But even there, he tells us, they are a promise to us. What God speaks, He speaks to His people, and speaks once for all. And if the divine presence in the camp of Israel—a presence represented by the Ark and its tent—was to consecrate that nation to Jehovah, and inspire them with zeal to keep the camp clean, that nothing might offend the eyes of His glory, how much more ought those whom God has visited in His Son, those in whom He dwells through His Spirit, to cleanse themselves from every defilement, and make their souls fit for His habitation? After repeating the charge to come out and be separate, the writer heaps up new promises, in which the letter and the spirit of various Old Testament passages are freely combined.[1] The principal one seems to be 2 Sam. vii., which contains the promises originally made to Solomon. At ver. 14 of that chapter we have the idea of the paternal and

[1] So freely that Ewald thinks the words from *κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι* onward are a quotation from some unknown source: as, *e.g.*, Eph. v. 14.

filial relation, and at ver. 8 the speaker is described in the LXX., as here, as the Lord Almighty. But passages like Jer. xxxi. 1, 9, also doubtless floated through the writer's mind, and it is the substance, not the form, which is the main thing. The very freedom with which they are reproduced shows us how thoroughly the writer is at home, and how confident he is that he is making the right and natural application of these ancient promises.

Separate yourselves, for you are God's temple: separate yourselves, and you will be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and He will be your Father. *Hæc una ratio instar mille esse debet.* The friendship of the world, as James reminds us, is enmity with God; it is the consoling side of the same truth that separation from the world means friendship with God. It does not mean solitude, but a more blessed society; not renunciation of love, but admission to the only love which satisfies the soul, because that for which the soul was made. The Puritanism of the New Testament is no harsh, repellent thing, which eradicates the affections, and makes life bleak and barren; it is the condition under which the heart is opened to the love of God, and filled with all comfort and joy in obedience. With Him on our side—with the promise of His indwelling Spirit to sanctify us, of His fatherly kindness to enrich and protect us—shall we not obey the exhortation to come out and be separate, to cleanse ourselves from all that defiles, to perfect holiness in His fear?

XIX

REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE

"Open your hearts to us: we wronged no man, we corrupted no man, we took advantage of no man. I say it not to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die together and live together. Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying on your behalf: I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.

"For even when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no relief, but *we were* afflicted on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears. Nevertheless He that comforteth the lowly, *even* God, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but also by the comfort wherewith he was comforted in you, while he told us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced yet more. For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it, though I did regret; for I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, *a repentance* which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what longing, yea, what zeal, yea, what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter. So although I wrote unto you, *I wrote* not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but that your earnest care for us might be made manifest unto you in the sight of God. Therefore we have been comforted: and in our comfort we joyed the more exceedingly for the joy of Titus, because his spirit hath been refreshed by you all. For if in anything I have gloried to him on your behalf, I was not put to shame; but as we spake all things to you in truth, so our glorying also, which I made before

Titus, was found to be truth. And his inward affection is more abundantly toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice that in everything I am of good courage concerning you."—2 Cor. vii. 2-16 (R.V.).

IN this fine passage St. Paul completes, as far as it lay upon his side to do so, his reconciliation with the Corinthians. It concludes the first great division of his Second Epistle, and henceforth we hear no more of the sinner censured so severely in the First (chap. v.),[1] or of the troubles which arose in the Church over the disciplinary treatment of his sin. The end of a quarrel between friends is like the passing away of a storm; the elements are meant to be at peace with each other, and nature never looks so lovely as in the clear shining after rain. The effusion of feeling in this passage, so affectionate and unreserved; the sense that the storm-clouds have no more than left the sky, yet that fair weather has begun, make it conspicuously beautiful even in the writings of St. Paul.

He begins by resuming the appeal interrupted at chap. vi. 13. He has charged the Corinthians with being straitened in their own affections: distrust and calumny have narrowed their souls, nay, shut them against him altogether. "Receive us," he exclaims here—*i.e.*, open your hearts to us. "You have no cause to be reserved: we wronged no man, ruined no man, took advantage of no man." Such charges had doubtless been made against him. The point of the last is clear from chap. xii. 16-18: he had been accused of making money out of his apostolic work among them. The other words are less precise, especially the one rendered "corrupted"

[1] But see on chap. ii. 5-11.

(ἐφθείραμεν), which should perhaps be rather explained, as in 1 Cor. iii. 17, "destroyed." Paul has not wronged or ruined any one in Corinth. Of course, his Gospel made serious demands upon people: it insisted on readiness to make sacrifices, and on actual sacrifice besides; it proceeded with extreme severity against sinners like the incestuous man; it entailed obligations, as we shall presently hear, to help the poor even of distant lands; and then, as still, such claims might easily be resented as ruinous or unjust. St. Paul simply denies the charge. He does not retort it; it is not his object to condemn those whom he loves so utterly. He has told them already that they are in his heart to die together and to live together (vi. 11); and when this is so, there is no place for recrimination or bandying of reproaches. He is full of confidence in them;[1] he can freely make his boast of them. He has had affliction enough, but over it all he has been filled with consolation; even as he writes, his joy overflows (observe the present · ὑπερπερισσεύομαι).

That word—"ye are in our hearts to die together and to live together"—is the key to all that follows. It has suffered much at the hands of grammarians, for whom it has undeniable perplexities; but vehement emotion may be permitted to be in some degree inarticulate, and we can always feel, even if we cannot demonstrate, what it means. "Your image in my heart accompanies me in death and life,"[2] is as nearly as possible what the Apostle says; and if the order of the words is unusual —for "life" would naturally stand first—that may be due

[1] This is, I think, the only possible meaning of πολλή μοι παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

[2] So Schmiedel.

to the fact, so largely represented in chap. iv., that his life was a series of deadly perils, and of ever-renewed deliverances from them, a daily dying and a daily resurrection, through all the vicissitudes of which the Corinthians never lost their place in his heart. More artificial interpretations only obscure the intensity of that love which united the Apostle to his converts. It is levelled here, unconsciously no doubt, but all the more impressively, with the love which God in Christ Jesus our Lord bears to His redeemed. "I am persuaded," St. Paul writes to the Romans, "that neither death nor life can separate us from that." "You may be assured," he writes here to the Corinthians, "that neither death nor life can separate you from my love." The reference of death and life is of course different, but the strength of conviction and of emotion is the same in both cases. St. Paul's heart is pledged irrevocably and irreversibly to the Church. In the deep feeling that he is theirs, he has an assurance that they also are his. The love with which he loves them is bound to prevail; nay, it has prevailed, and he can hardly find words to express his joy. *En qualiter affectos esse omnes Pastores conveniat* (Calvin).

The next three verses carry us back to chap. ii. 12 ff., and resume the story which was interrupted there at ver. 14. The sudden thanksgiving of that passage—so eager and impetuous that it left the writer no time to tell what he was thankful for—is explained here. Titus, whom he had expected to see in Troas, arrived at length, probably at Philippi, and brought with him the most cheering news. Paul was sadly in need of it. His flesh had no rest: the use of the perfect (ἔσχηκεν) almost conveys the feeling that he began to write whenever he got the news, so that up to this

moment the strain had continued. The fights without were probably assaults upon himself, or the Churches, of the nature of persecution; the fears within, his anxieties about the state of morals, or of Gospel truth, in the Christian communities. Outworn and depressed, burdened both in body and mind (cf. the expressions in ii. 13 and vii. 5), he was suddenly lifted on high by the arrival and the news of Titus. Here again, as in ii. 14, he ascribes all to God. It was He whose very nature it is to comfort the lowly who so graciously comforted him. Titus apparently had gone himself with a sad and apprehensive heart to Corinth; he had been away longer than he had anticipated, and in the interval St. Paul's anxiety had risen to anguish; but in Corinth his reception had been unexpectedly favourable, and when he returned he was able to console his master with a consolation which had already gladdened his own heart. Paul was not only comforted, his sorrow was turned into joy, as he listened to Titus telling of the longing of the Corinthians to see him, of their mourning over the pain they had given him by their tolerance for such irregularities as that of the incestuous man or the unknown insulter of the Apostle, and of their eagerness to satisfy him and maintain his authority. The word "your" (ὑμῶν) in ver. 7 has a certain emphasis which suggests a contrast. Before Titus went to Corinth, it was Paul who had been anxious to see *them*, who had mourned over their immoral laxity, who had been passionately interested in vindicating the character of the Church he had founded; now it is *they* who are full of longing to see *him*, of grief, and of moral earnestness; and it is this which explains his joy. The conflict between the powers of good in one great and passionate soul, and

the powers of evil in a lax and fickle community, has ended in favour of the good; Paul's vehemence has prevailed against Corinthian indifference, and made it vehement also in all good affections, and he rejoices now in the joy of his Lord.

Then comes the most delicate part of this reconciliation (vv. 8-12). It is a good rule in making up disputes to let bygones be bygones, as far as possible; there may be a little spark hidden here and there under what seem dead ashes, and there is no gain in raking up the ashes, and giving the spark a chance to blaze again. But this is a good rule only because we are bad men, and because reconciliation is seldom allowed to have its perfect work. We feel, and say, after we have quarrelled with a person and been reconciled, that it can never be the same again. But this ought not to be so; and if we were perfect in love, or ardent in love at all, it would not be so. If we were in one another's hearts, to die together and to live together, we should retrace the past together in the very act of being reconciled; and all its misunderstandings and bitterness and badness, instead of lying hidden in us as matter of recrimination for some other day when we are tempted, would add to the sincerity, the tenderness, and the spirituality of our love. The Apostle sets us an example here, of the rarest and most difficult virtue, when he goes back upon the story of his relations with the Corinthians, and makes the bitter stock yield sweet and wholesome fruit.[1]

[1] It is difficult to fix either the text or the punctuation in ver. 8, and agreement among critics is quite hopeless. Practically they are at one in omitting the γὰρ of the Received Text after βλέπω: and Schmiedel agrees with Lachmann and Westcott and Hort that the

The whole result is in his mind when he writes, "Although I made you sorry with the letter, I do not regret it." The letter is, on the simplest hypothesis, the First Epistle; and though no one would willingly speak to his friends as Paul in some parts of that Epistle speaks to the Corinthians, he cannot pretend that he wishes it unwritten. "Although I did regret it," he goes on, "now I rejoice." He regretted it, we must understand, before Titus came back from Corinth. In that melancholy interval, all he saw was that the letter made them sorry; it was bound to do so, even if it should only be temporarily; but his heart smote him for making them sorry at all. It vexed him to vex them. No doubt this is the plain truth he is telling them, and it is hard to see why it should have been regarded as inconsistent with his apostolic inspiration. He did not cease to have a living soul because he was inspired; and if in his despondency it crossed his mind to say, "That letter will only grieve them," he must have said in the same instant, "I wish I had never written it." But both impulses were momentary only; he has heard now the whole effect of his letter, and rejoices that he wrote it. Not, of course, that they were made sorry—no one could rejoice for that—but that they were made sorry to repentance. "For ye were made sorry according to God, that in nothing ye might suffer loss on our part. For sorrow according to God worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance

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original reading was probably *βλέπων*. The R.V. has the same punctuation as the A.V., which probably means that the Revisers could not get a sufficient majority to change it, not that it is quite satisfactory as it stands. It certainly seems better to connect *εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην* with what follows (*νῦν χαίρω*) than with what precedes; but the sense is not affected.

which bringeth no regret. But the sorrow of the world worketh death."

Most people define repentance as a kind of sorrow, but this is not exactly St. Paul's view here. There is a kind of sorrow, he intimates, which issues in repentance, but repentance itself is not so much an emotional as a spiritual change. The sorrow which ends in it is a blessed experience; the sorrow which does not end in it is the most tragical waste of which human nature is capable. The Corinthians, we are told, were made sorry, or grieved, according to God. Their sorrow had respect to Him: when the Apostle's letter pricked their hearts, they became conscious of that which they had forgotten—God's relation to them, and His judgment on their conduct. It is this element which makes any sorrow "godly," and without this, sorrow does not look towards repentance at all. All sins sooner or later bring the sense of loss with them; but the sense of loss is not repentance. It is not repentance when we discover that our sin has found us out, and has put the things we most coveted beyond our reach. It is not repentance when the man who has sown his wild oats is compelled in bitterness of soul to reap what he has sown. It is not a sorrow according to God when our sin is summed up for us in the pain it inflicts upon ourselves—in our own loss, our own defeat, our own humiliation, our own exposure, our own unavailing regret. These are not healing, but embittering. The sorrow according to God is that in which the sinner is conscious of his sin in relation to the Holy One, and feels that its inmost soul of pain and guilt is this, that he has fallen away from the grace and friendship of God. He has wounded a love to which he is dearer than he is to

himself: to know this is really to grieve, and that not with a self-consuming, but with a healing, hopeful sorrow. It was such a sorrow to which Paul's letter gave rise at Corinth: it is such a sorrow which issues in repentance, that complete change of spiritual attitude which ends in salvation, and need never be regretted. Anything else—the sorrow, *e.g.*, which is bounded by the selfish interests of the sinner, and is not due to his sinful act, but only to its painful consequences—is the sorrow of the world. It is such as men feel in that realm of life in which no account is taken of God; it is such as weakens and breaks the spirit, or embitters and hardens it, turning it now to defiance and now to despair, but never to God, and penitent hope in Him. It is in this way that it works death. If death is to be defined at all, it must be by contrast with salvation: the grief which has not God as its rule can only exhaust the soul, wither up its faculties, blight its hopes, extinguish and deaden all.

St. Paul can point to the experience of the Corinthians themselves as furnishing a demonstration of these truths. "Consider your own godly sorrow," he seems to say, "and what blessed fruits it bore. What earnest care it wrought in you! how eager became your interest in a situation to which you had once been sinfully indifferent!" But "earnest care" is not all. On the contrary (ἀλλὰ), Paul expands it into a whole series of acts or dispositions, all of which are inspired by that sorrow according to God. When they thought of the infamy which sin had brought upon the Church, they were eager to clear themselves of complicity in it (ἀπολογίαν), and angry with themselves that they had ever allowed such a thing to be

(*ἀγανάκτησιν*); when they thought of the Apostle, they feared lest he should come to them with a rod (*φόβον*), and yet their hearts went out in longing desires to see him (*ἐπιπόθησιν*); when they thought of the man whose sin was at the bottom of all this trouble, they were full of moral earnestness, which made lax dealing with him impossible (*ζῆλον*), and compelled them to punish his offence (*ἐκδίκησιν*). In every way they made it evident that, in spite of early appearances, they were really pure in the matter. They were not, after all, making themselves partakers, by condoning it, of the bad man's offence.

A popular criticism disparages repentance, and especially the sorrow which leads to repentance, as a mere waste of moral force. We have nothing to throw away, the severely practical moralist tells us, in sighs and tears and feelings: let us be up and doing, to rectify the wrongs for which we are responsible; that is the only repentance which is worth the name. This passage, and the experience which it depicts, are the answer to such precipitate criticism. The descent into our own hearts, the painful self-scrutiny and self-condemnation, the sorrowing according to God, are not waste of moral force. Rather are they the only possible way to accumulate moral force; they apply to the soul the pressure under which it manifests those potent virtues which St. Paul here ascribes to the Corinthians. All sorrow, indeed, as he is careful to tell us, is not repentance; but he who has no sorrow for his sin has not the force in him to produce earnest care, fear, longing, zeal, avenging. The fruit, of course, is that for which the tree is cultivated; but who would magnify the fruit by disparaging the sap? That is what they do who decry "godly sorrow" to exalt practical amendment.

With this reference to the effect of his letter upon them, the Apostle virtually completes his reconciliation to the Corinthians. He chooses to consider the effect of his letter as the purpose for which it was written, and this enables him to dismiss what had been a very painful subject with a turn as felicitous as it is affectionate. "So then, though I did write to you, it was not for his sake who did the wrong [the sinner of 1 Cor. v.], nor for his who had it done to him [his father][1]; but that you yourselves might become conscious of your earnest care of our interests in the sight of God." Awkward as some of the situations had been, all that remained, so far as the Apostle and the Corinthians were concerned, was this: they knew better than before how deeply they were attached to him, and how much they would do for his sake. He chooses, as I have said, to regard this last result of his writing as the purpose for which he wrote; and when he ends the twelfth verse with the words, "For this cause, we have been comforted,"[2] it is as if he said, "I have got what I wanted now, and am content."

But content is far too weak a word. Paul had heard all this good news from Titus, and the comfort which it gave him was exalted into abounding joy when he saw how the visit to Corinth had gladdened and refreshed the spirit of his friend. Evidently Titus had accepted Paul's commission with misgivings: possibly Timothy, who had been earlier enlisted for the same service (1 Cor. xvi. 10), had found his courage

[1] But see on chap. ii. 5-11.

[2] This is the true text. Instead of ἐπὶ τῇ παρακλήσει in ver. 13 all critical editions read ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ π., and make these words begin a new paragraph.

fail him, and withdrawn. At all events, Paul had spoken encouragingly to Titus of the Corinthians before he started; as he puts it in ver. 14, he had boasted somewhat to him on their account; and he is delighted that their reception of Titus has shown that his confidence was justified. He cannot refrain here from a passing allusion to the charges of prevarication discussed in the first chapter; he not only tells the truth *about* them (as Titus has seen), but he has always told the truth *to* them. These verses present the character of Paul in an admirable light: not only his sympathy with Titus, but his attitude to the Corinthians, is beautifully Christian. What in most cases of estrangement makes reconciliation hard is that the estranged have allowed themselves to speak of each other to outsiders in a way that cannot be forgotten or got over. But even when the tension between Paul and the Corinthians was at its height, he boasted of them to Titus. His love to them was so real that nothing could blind him to their good qualities. He could say severe things to them, but he would never disparage or malign them to other people; and if we wish friendships to last, and to stand the strains to which all human ties are occasionally subject, we must never forget this rule. "Boast somewhat," even of the man who has wronged you, if you possibly can. If you have ever loved him, you certainly can, and it makes reconciliation easy.

The last results of the painful friction between Paul and the Corinthians were peculiarly happy. The Apostle's confidence in them was completely restored, and they had completely won the heart of Titus. "His affections are more abundantly toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and

trembling ye received him." "Fear and trembling" is an expression which St. Paul uses elsewhere, and which is liable to be misunderstood. It does not suggest panic, but an anxious scrupulous desire not to be wanting to one's duty, or to do less than one ought to do. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you," does not mean "Do it in a constant state of agitation or alarm," but "Work on with this resource behind you, in the same spirit with which a young man of character would work, who was starting in business on capital advanced by a friend." He would proceed, or ought to proceed, with fear and trembling, not of the sort which paralyse intelligence and energy, but of the sort which peremptorily preclude slackness or failure in duty. This is the meaning here also. The Corinthians were not frightened for Paul's deputy, but they welcomed him with an anxious conscientious desire to do the very utmost that duty and love could require. This, says Calvin, is the true way to receive ministers of Christ: and it is this only which will gladden a true minister's heart. Sometimes, with the most innocent intention, the whole situation is changed, and the minister, though received with the utmost courtesy and kindness, is not received with fear and trembling at all. Partly through his own fault, and partly through the fault of others, he ceases to be the representative of anything that inspires reverence, or excites to conscientious earnestness of conduct. If, under these circumstances, he continues to be kindly treated, he is apt to end in being, not the pastor, but the pet lamb of his flock. In apostolic times there was no danger of this, but modern ministers and modern congregations have sometimes thrown away all the possibilities of good in their

mutual relations by disregarding it. The affection which they ought to have to each other is Christian, not merely natural; controlled by spiritual ideas and purposes, and not a matter of ordinary good feeling; and where this is forgotten, all is lost.

XX

THE GRACE OF LIBERALITY

"Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the Churches of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, *they gave* of their own accord, beseeching us with much intreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints: and *this*, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God. Insomuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also. But as ye abound in everything, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all earnestness, and *in* your love to us, *see* that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by the way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich. And herein I give *my* judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. But now complete the doing also; that as *there was* the readiness to will, so *there may be* the completion also out of your ability. For if the readiness is there, *it is* acceptable according as *a man* hath, not according as *he* hath not. For *I say* not *this*, that others may be eased, *and* ye distressed: but by equality; your abundance *being a supply* at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your want; that there may be equality: as it is written, He that *gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *gathered* little had no lack."—2 Cor. viii. 1-15 (R.V.).

WITH the eighth chapter begins the second of the three great divisions of this Epistle. It is concerned exclusively with the collection which the Apostle

was raising in all the Gentile Christian communities for the poor of the Mother Church at Jerusalem. This collection had great importance in his eyes, for various reasons: it was the fulfilment of his undertaking, to the original Apostles, to remember the poor (Gal. ii. 10); and it was a testimony to the saints in Palestine of the love of the Gentile brethren in Christ. The fact that Paul interested himself so much in this collection, destined as it was for Jerusalem, proves that he distinguished broadly between the primitive Church and its authorities on the one hand, and the Jewish emissaries whom he treats so unsparingly in chaps. x. and xi. on the other.

Money is usually a delicate topic to handle in the Church, and we may count ourselves happy in having two chapters from the pen of St. Paul in which he treats at large of a collection. We see the mind of Christ applied in them to a subject which is always with us, and sometimes embarrassing; and if there are traces here and there that embarrassment was felt even by the Apostle, they only show more clearly the wonderful wealth of thought and feeling which he could bring to bear on an ungrateful theme. Consider only the variety of lights in which he puts it, and all of them ideal. "Money," as such, has no character, and so he never mentions it. But he calls the thing which he wants a grace (*χάρις*), a service (*διακονία*), a communion in service (*κοινωνία*), a munificence (*ἁδρότης*), a blessing (*εὐλογία*), a manifestation of love. The whole resources of Christian imagination are spent in transfiguring, and lifting into a spiritual atmosphere, a subject on which even Christian men are apt to be materialistic. We do not need to be hypocritical when we speak about money in the Church; but

both the charity and the business of the Church must be transacted as Christian, and not as secular, affairs.

Paul introduces the new topic with his usual felicity. He has got through some rough water in the first seven chapters, but ends with expressions of joy and satisfaction. When he goes on in the eighth chapter, it is in the same cheerful key. It is as though he said to the Corinthians: "You have made me very happy, and now I must tell you what a happy experience I have had in Macedonia. The grace of God has been poured out on the Churches, and they have given with incredible liberality to the collection for the Jewish poor. It so moved me that I begged Titus, who had already made some arrangements in connexion with this matter among you, to return and complete the work."

Speaking broadly, the Apostle invites the Corinthians to look at the subject through three media: (1) the example of the Macedonians; (2) the example of the Lord; and (3) the laws by which God estimates liberality.

(1) The liberality of the Macedonians is described as "the grace of God given in the Churches." This is the aspect of it which conditions every other; it is not the native growth of the soul, but a divine gift for which God is to be thanked. Praise Him when hearts are opened, and generosity shown; for it is His work. In Macedonia this grace was set off by the circumstances of the people. Their Christian character was put to the severe proof of a great affliction (see 1 Thess. ii. 14 f.); they were themselves in deep poverty; but their joy abounded nevertheless (1 Thess. i. 6), and joy and poverty together poured out a rich stream of

liberality.[1] This may sound paradoxical, but paradox is normal here. Strange to say, it is not those to whom the Gospel comes easily, and on whom it imposes little, who are most generous in its cause. On the contrary, it is those who have suffered for it, those who have lost by it, who are as a rule most open-handed. Comfort makes men selfish, even though they are Christian; but if they are Christian, affliction, even to the spoiling of their goods, teaches them generosity. The first generation of Methodists in England—the men who in 1843 fought the good fight of the faith in Scotland—illustrate this law; in much proof of affliction, it might be said of them also, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality. Paul was almost embarrassed with the liberality of the Macedonians. When he looked at their poverty, he did not hope for much (ver. 5). He would not have felt justified in urging people who were themselves in such distress to do much for the relief of others. But they did not need urging: it was they who urged him. The Apostle's sentence breaks down as he tries to convey an adequate impression of their eagerness (ver. 4), and he has to leave off and begin again (ver. 5). To their power, he bears witness, yes and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord. They importuned him to bestow on them also the favour of sharing in this service to the saints. And when their request was granted, it was no paltry contribution that they made; they gave *themselves* to the Lord, to begin with, and to the Apostle,

[1] Ἁπλότης is literally simplicity or singleness of heart, the disposition which, when it gives, does so without *arrière-pensée*: in point of fact this is identical with the liberal or generous disposition. Cf. chap. ix. 11, 13; Rom. xii. 8; James i. 5.

as His agent in the transaction, by the will of God. The last words resume, in effect, those with which St. Paul introduced this topic: it was God's doing, the working of His will on their wills, that the Macedonians behaved as they did. I cannot think the English version is right in the rendering: "And this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord." This inevitably suggests that afterwards they gave something else—viz., their subscriptions. But this is a false contrast, and gives the word "first" (*πρῶτον*) a false emphasis, which it has not in the original. What St. Paul says is virtually this: "We expected little from people so poor, but by God's will they literally put *themselves* at the service of the Lord, in the first instance, and of us as His administrators. They said to us, to our amazement and joy, 'We are Christ's, and yours after Him, to command in this matter.'" This is one of the finest and most inspiring experiences that a Christian minister can have, and, God be thanked, it is none of the rarest. Many a man besides Paul has been startled and ashamed by the liberality of those from whom he would not have ventured to beg. Many a man has been importuned to take what he could not have dared to ask. It is a mistake to refuse such generosity, to decline it as too much; it gladdens God, and revives the heart of man. It is a mistake to deprive the poorest of the opportunity of offering this sacrifice of praise; it is the poorest in whom it has most munificence, and to whom it brings the deepest joy. Rather ought we to open our hearts to the impression of it, as to the working of God's grace, and rouse our own selfishness to do something not less worthy of Christ's love.

This was the application which St. Paul made of the

generosity of the Macedonians. Under the impression of it he exhorted Titus, who on a previous occasion[1] had made some preliminary arrangements about the matter in Corinth, to return thither and complete the work. He had other things also to complete, but "this grace" was to be specially included (*καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην*). Perhaps one may see a gentle irony in the tone of ver. 7. "Enough of argument," the Apostle says:[2] "let Christians distinguished as you are in every respect—in faith and eloquence and knowledge and all sorts of zeal, and in the love that comes from you and abides in us—see that they are distinguished in this grace also." It is a real character that is suggested here by way of contrast, but not exactly a lovely one: the man who abounds in spiritual interests, who is fervent, prayerful, affectionate, able to speak in the Church, but unable to part with money.

(2) This brings the Apostle to his second point, the example of the Lord. "I do not speak by way of commandment," he says, "in urging you to be liberal; I am only taking occasion, through the earnestness of others, to put the sincerity of your love to the proof. If you truly love the brethren you will not grudge to help them in their distress. The Macedonians, of course, are no law for you; and though it was from them I started, I do not need to urge their example; 'for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich.'" This is the one pattern that stands for ever before the eyes of

[1] Previous to his recent visit? So Schmiedel. Or simply = formerly?

[2] This, according to Hermann (quoted by Meyer), is often the force of ἀλλά, which is certainly a surprising word here.

Christian men, the fountain of an inspiration as strong and pure to-day as when Paul wrote these words.

Read simply, and by one who has the Christian creed in his mind, the words do not appear ambiguous. Christ was rich, they tell us; He became poor for our sakes, and by His poverty we become rich. If a commentary is needed, it is surely to be sought in the parallel passage Phil. ii. 5 ff. The rich Christ is the pre-existent One, in the form of God, in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was; He became poor when He became man. The poor men are those whose lot Christ came to share, and in consequence of that self-impoverishment of His they become heirs of a kingdom. It is not necessary, indeed it is utterly misleading, to ask curiously *how* Christ became poor, or what kind of experience it was for Him when He exchanged heaven for earth, and the form of God for the form of a servant. As Mr. Gore has well said, it is not the metaphysics of the Incarnation that St. Paul is concerned with, either here or in Philippians, but its ethics. We may never have a scientific key to it, but we have a moral key. If we do not comprehend its method, at least we comprehend its motive, and it is in its motive that the inspiration of it lies. We know *the grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it comes home to our hearts when the Apostle says, "Let that *mind*—that moral temper—be in you which was also in Him." Ordinary charity is but the crumbs from the rich man's table; but if we catch Christ's spirit, it will carry us far beyond that. He was rich, and gave up all for our sakes; it is no less than poverty on His part which enriches us.

The older theologians, especially of the Lutheran Church, read this great text differently, and their opinion

is not yet quite extinct. They referred *ἐπτώχευσεν*, not to Christ's entrance on the incarnate state, but to His existence in it;[1] they puzzled themselves to conceive of Him as rich and poor at the same time; and they quite took the point from St. Paul's exhortation by making *ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν* describe a combination, instead of an interchange, of states. It is a counsel of despair when a recent commentator (Heinrici), sympathising with this view, but yielding to the comparison of Phil. ii. 5 ff., tries to unite the two interpretations, and to make *ἐπτώχευσεν* cover both the coming to earth from heaven and the life in poverty on earth. No word can mean two different things at the same time: and in this daring attempt we may fairly see a final surrender of the orthodox Lutheran interpretation.

Some strange criticisms have been passed on this appeal to the Incarnation as a motive to liberality. It shows, Schmiedel says, Paul's contempt for the knowledge of Christ after the flesh, when the Incarnation is all he can adduce as a pattern for such a simply human thing as a charitable gift. The same contempt, then, we must presume, is shown in Philippians, when the same great pattern is held up to inspire Christians with lowly thoughts of themselves, and with consideration for others. It is shown, perhaps, again at the close of that magnificent chapter—the fifteenth in First Corinthians—where all the glory to be revealed when Christ transfigures His people is made a reason for the sober virtues of stedfastness and patience. The truth is rather that Paul knew from experience that the supreme motives are needed on the most ordinary occasions.

[1] Translating it, of course, "*was* poor," or "lived poor": which is not impossible in itself.

He never appeals to incidents, not because he does not know them, or because he despises them, but because it is far more potent and effectual to appeal to Christ. His mind gravitates to the Incarnation, or the Cross, or the Heavenly Throne, because the power and virtue of the Redeemer are concentrated there. The spirit that wrought redemption, and that changes men into the image of the Lord—the spirit without which *no* Christian disposition, not even the most "simply human," can be produced—is felt there, if one may say so, in gathered intensity; and it is not the want of a concrete vision of Jesus such as Peter and John had, nor a scholastic insensibility to such living and love-compelling details as our first three Gospels furnish, that makes Paul have recourse thither; it is the instinct of the evangelist and pastor who knows that the hope of souls is to live in the presence of the very highest things. Of course Paul believed in the pre-existence and in the Incarnation. The writer quoted above does not, and naturally the appeal of the text is artificial and unimpressive to him. But may we not ask, in view of the simplicity, the unaffectedness, and the urgency with which St. Paul uses this appeal both here and in Philippians, whether *his* faith in the pre-existence can have had no more than the precarious speculative foundation which is given to it by so many who reconstruct his theology? "Christ, the perfect reconciler, must be the perfect revealer of God; God's purpose—that for which He made all things—must be seen in Him; but that for which God made all things must have existed (in the mind of God) before all things; therefore Christ is (ideally) from everlasting." This is the substance of many explanations of how St. Paul came by his Christology; but if this had been

all, *could* St. Paul by any possibility have appealed thus naïvely to the Incarnation *as a fact*, and a fac which was one of the mainsprings of Christian morality ?

(3) The Apostle pauses for a moment to urge his plea in the interest of the Corinthians themselves. He is not commanding, but giving his judgment: "this," he says, "is profitable for you, who began[1] a year ago, not only to do, but also to will.[2] But now complete the doing also." Every one knows this situation, and its evils. A good work which has been set on foot with interest and spontaneity enough, but which has begun to drag, and is in danger of coming to nothing, is very demoralising. It enfeebles the conscience, and spoils the temper. It develops irresolution and incapacity, and it stands perpetually in the way of anything else that has to be done. Many a bright idea stumbles over it, and can get no further. It is not only worldly wisdom, but divine wisdom, which says: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." If it is the giving of money, the building of a church, the insuring of a life, complete the doing. To be always thinking about it, and always in an ineffective way busy about it, is not profitable for you.

It is in this connexion that the Apostle lays down the laws of Christian liberality. In these verses (11 to 15) there are three. (*a*) First, there must be readiness, or, as the Authorised Version puts it, a willing mind. What is given must be given freely; it must be a gracious offering, not a tax. This is fundamental. The law of the Old Testament is re-enacted in the New: "Of every man *whose heart maketh him willing* shall ye

[1] The προ in προενήρξασθε seems to mean "before the Macedonians."

[2] The order of "do" and "will" is peculiar and has not been clearly explained.

take the Lord's offering." What we spend in piety and charity is not tribute paid to a tyrant, but the response of gratitude to our Redeemer: and if it has not this character He does not want it. If there be *first* a willing mind, the rest is easy; if not, there is no need to go on. (*b*) The second law is, "according as a man has." *Readiness* is the acceptable thing, not this or that proof of it. If we cannot give much, then a ready mind makes even a little acceptable. Only let us remember this, that readiness always gives all that is in its power. The readiness of the poor widow in the Temple could only give two mites, but two mites were all her living; the readiness of the Macedonians was in the depths of poverty, but they gave *themselves* to the Lord. The widow's mites are an illustrious example of sacrifice, and this word of the Apostle contains a moving appeal for generosity; yet the two together have been profaned times innumerable to cloak the meanest selfishness. (*c*) The third law is reciprocity. Paul does not write that the Jews may be relieved and the Corinthians burdened, but on the principle of equality: at this crisis the superfluity of the Corinthians is to make up what is wanting to the Jews, and at some other the situation will be exactly reversed. Brotherhood cannot be one-sided; it must be mutual, and in the interchange of services equality is the result. This, as the quotation hints, answers to God's design in regard to worldly goods, as that design is indicated in the story of the manna: He that gathered much had no more than his neighbours, and he that gathered little had no less. To be selfish is not an infallible way of getting more than your share; you may cheat your neighbour by that policy, but you will not get the better of God. In all probability men are far more nearly on

an equality, in respect of what their worldly possessions yield, than the rich in their pride, or the poor in their envious discontent, would readily believe; but where inequality is patent and painful—a glaring violation of the divine intention here suggested—there is a call for charity to redress the balance. Those who give to the poor are co-operating with God, and the more a community is Christianised, the more will that state be realised in which each has what he needs.

XXI

THE FRUITS OF LIBERALITY

"But thanks be to God, which putteth the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For indeed he accepted our exhortation but being himself very earnest, he went forth unto you of his own accord. And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the Gospel *is spread* through all the Churches; and not only so, but who was also appointed by the Churches to travel with us in *the matter of* this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord, and *to show* our readiness: avoiding this, that any man should blame us in *the matter of* this bounty which is ministered by us: for we take thought for things honourable, not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have many times proved earnest in many things, but now much more earnest by reason of the great confidence which *he hath* in you. Whether *any inquire* about Titus, *he is* my partner, and *my* fellow-worker to you-ward; or our brethren, *they are* the messengers of the Churches, *they are* the glory of Christ. Show ye therefore unto them in the face of the Churches the proof of your love, and of our glorying on your behalf.

"For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: for I know your readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your zeal hath stirred up very many of them. But I have sent the brethren, that our glorying on your behalf may not be made void in this respect; that, even as I said, ye may be prepared: lest by any means, if there come with me any of Macedonia, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be put to shame in this confidence. I thought it necessary therefore to intreat the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your afore-promised bounty, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not of extortion.

"But this *I say*, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. *Let* each

man *do* according as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work: as it is written,

> He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor;
> His righteousness abideth for ever.

And He that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: ye being enriched in everything unto all liberality, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God. For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God; seeing that through the proving *of you* by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the Gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution unto them and unto all; while they themselves also, with supplication on your behalf, long after you by reason of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift."—2 Cor. viii. 16-ix. 15 (R.V.).

THIS long passage has a good many difficulties of detail, for the grammarian and the textual critic. Where it seems necessary, these will be referred to in the notes; but as the large meaning of the writer is hardly affected by them, they need not interrupt the course of exposition. It falls into three parts, which are clearly marked as such in the Revised Version: (1) Chap. viii. 16-24, commending to the Corinthians the three brethren who were to precede Paul and prepare the collection; (2) Chap. ix. 1-5, appealing to the motives of emulation and shame to reinforce love in the matter; and (3) Chap. ix. 6-15, urging liberality, and enlarging on the blessed fruits it yields. The first of these divisions begins, and the last ends, with an exclamatory ascription of thanks to God.

(1) Chap. viii. 16-24. Of the three men who acted as commissioners in this delicate undertaking, only one, Titus, is known to us by name. He had just

returned from Corinth; he knew all the critical points in the situation; and no doubt the Apostle was glad to have such a man at the head of the little party. He was thankful to God that on the occasion of that previous visit the Corinthians had completely won the heart of Titus, and that his loyal fellow-worker needed no compulsion to return. He was leaving[1] Paul of his own accord, full of earnest care for his Achaian friends. Along with him went a second—the brother whose praise in the Gospel was through all the Churches. It is useless to ask who the brother was. A very early opinion, alluded to by Origen, and represented apparently in the traditional subscription to this Epistle, identified him with Luke. Probably the ground for this identification was the idea that his "praise in the Gospel" referred to Luke's work as an evangelist. But this cannot be: first, because Luke's Gospel cannot have been written so early; and, secondly, because "the Gospel" at this date does not mean a written thing at all. This man's praise in the Gospel must mean the credit he had acquired by his services to the Christian faith; it might be by some bold confession, or by activity as an evangelist, or by notable hospitality to missionaries, or by such helpful ministries as the one he was now engaged in. The real point of interest for us in the expression is the glimpse it gives us of the unity of the Church, and the unimpeded circulation of one life through all its members. Its early divisions, theological and racial, have been sufficiently emphasised; it is well worth while to observe the unity of the spirit. It was this, eventually, which gave the

[1] Αὐθαίρετος ἐξῆλθεν: the aorists all through this passage are virtually epistolary—ἐξῆλθεν=he is going; συνεπέμψαμεν=I am sending with him.

Church its power in the decline of the Empire. It was the only institution which extended over the area of civilisation with a common spirit, common sympathies, and a common standard of praise. It was a compliment to the Corinthians to include in this embassy one whose good name was honoured wherever men met in the name of Jesus. This brother was at the same time a deputy in a special sense. He had been elected by the Churches who were contributing to the collection, that he might accompany the Apostle when it was taken to Jerusalem. This, in itself, is natural enough, and it would not call for comment but for the remark to which the Apostle proceeds—"avoiding this, that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord, and *to show* our[1] readiness: for we take thought for things honourable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

There was evidently an unpleasant side to this transaction. Paul's interest in the collection, his enemies had plainly said (chap. xii. 17, 18), was not quite disinterested. He was capable of putting his own hand into the bag. What ought a Christian man to do in such a case? We shall see in a later chapter how keenly Paul felt this unworthy imputation, and with what generous passion he resented it; but here

[1] *Our* (ἡμῶν), not *your* (ὑμῶν), is the true reading. The precise sense is doubtful. It may be as the R.V. gives it, though this completely upsets the balance of the clauses πρὸς τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου δόξαν and καὶ προθυμίαν ἡμῶν. The meaning should rather be: "which is ministered by us, that the Lord may be glorified, and that we may be made of good heart"; only Paul's spirits seem a small thing side by side with the Lord's glory. There is something to say for the conjecture that the καὶ before προθυμίαν should be κατά, even though this could only be connected with χειροτονηθείς: "elected as we earnestly desired."

he betrays no indignation; he joins with the Churches who are making the collection in so ordering matters as to preclude suspicion. Wherever the money is concerned, his responsibility is to be shared with another. It is a pity that Christ should not be glorified, and the Apostle's zeal to help the poor saints made known, without the accompaniment of these base suspicions and precautionary measures; but in all things human, evil will mingle with good, and the humble course is best, which does not only what God knows to be honourable, but what men must see to be so too. In handling money especially, it is best to err on the safe side. If most men are too readily suspected by others, it only answers to the fact that most men are too ready to trust themselves. We have an infinite faith in our own honesty; and when auditors are appointed to examine their books, the inexperienced are apt to think it needless, and even impertinent. If they were wise, they would welcome it as a protection against suspicion and even against themselves. Many a man has ruined himself—not to speak of those who trusted him—by too blind a belief in his own integrity. The third brother who accompanied Titus seems to have been more closely associated with Paul than the second. He had proved him often, in many things, and found him uniformly earnest; and at this juncture the confidence he had in the Corinthians made him more earnest than ever. Paul extols the three in the highest terms before he sends them off; if anybody in Corinth wishes to know what they are, he is proud to tell. Titus is his partner in the apostolic calling, and has shared his work among them; the other brethren are deputies (apostles) of Churches, a glory of Christ. What an idealist Paul was! What an appreciation of

Christian character he had when he described these nameless believers as reflections of the splendour of Christ! To common eyes they might be commonplace men; but when Paul looked at them he saw the dawning of that brightness in which the Lord appeared to him by the way. Contact with the grimy side of human nature did not blind him to this radiance; rather did this glory of Christ in men's souls strengthen him to believe all things, to hope all things, to endure all things. In showing before these honoured messengers the proof of their love, and of his boasting on their behalf, the Corinthians will show it,[1] he says, before the face of the Churches. It will be officially reported throughout Christendom.

(2) Chap. ix. 1-5. This section strikes one at first as greatly wanting in connexion with what precedes. It looks like a new beginning, an independent writing on the same or a similar subject. This has led some scholars to argue that either chap. viii. or chap. ix. belongs to a different occasion, and that only resemblance in subject has led to one of them being erroneously inserted here beside the other. This, in the absence of any external indication, is an extremely violent supposition; and closer examination goes to dissipate that first impression. The statements, *e.g.*, in vv. 3-5 would be quite unintelligible if we had not chap. viii. 16-24 to explain them; and instead of saying there

[1] The T.R. has *ἐνδείξασθε* here, and so Westcott and Hort read in text, with ℵ, C, D**, etc. Most editors read with B, D*, E, F, G, etc. *ἐνδεικνύμενοι*. The imperative certainly seems to be a change made to facilitate the construction. Reading the participle, we must supply *ἐνδείξεσθε*, and put a comma after *ἐνδεικνύμενοι*: "in showing it to them, [you will show it] before the Churches." This is the same kind of ellipsis as in ver. 23.

is no connexion between ix. 1 and what precedes, we should rather say that the connexion is somewhat involved and circuitous—as will happen when one is handling a topic of unusual difficulty. It is to be explained thus. The Apostle feels that he has said a good deal now about the collection, and that there is a danger in being too urgent. He uses what he has just said about the reception of the brethren as a stepping-stone to another view of the subject, more flattering to the Corinthians, to begin with, and less importunate. "Maintain your character before them," he says in effect; "for as for the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to be writing to you as I do."[1] Instead of finding it necessary to urge their duty upon them, he has been able to hold up their readiness as an example to the Macedonians. "Achaia has been prepared for a year past," he said to his fond disciples in Thessalonica and Philippi; and the zeal of the Achaians, or rivalry of them, roused the majority of the Macedonians. This is one way of looking at what happened; another, and surely Paul would have been the first to say a more profound, is that of chap. viii. 1—the grace of God was given in the Churches of Macedonia. But the grace of God takes occasions, and uses means; and here its opportunity and its instrument for working in Macedonia was the ready generosity of the Corinthians. It has wrought, indeed, so effectively that the tables are turned, and now it is the liberality of Macedonia which is to provoke Corinth. Paul is sending on these brethren beforehand, lest, if any of the Macedonians should accompany him when he starts for Corinth

[1] This is the force of τὸ γράφειν.

himself, they should find matters not so flourishing as he had led them to believe. "That would put me to shame," he says to the Corinthians, "not to speak of you. I have been very confident in speaking of you as I have done in Macedonia: do keep up my credit and your own. Let this blessing, which you are going to bestow on the poor, be ready *as* a blessing—*i.e.*, as something which one gives willingly, and as liberally as he can; and not as a matter of avarice,[1] in which one gives reluctantly, keeping as much as he can."

The legitimacy of such motives as are appealed to in this paragraph will always be more or less questioned among Christian men, but as long as human nature is what it is they will always be appealed to. *Ζηλότυπον γὰρ τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος* (Chrys.). A great man of action like St. Paul will of course find his temptations along this line. He is so eager to get men to act, and the inertness of human nature is so great, that it is hard to decline anything which will set it in motion. It is not the highest motive, certainly, when the forwardness of one stimulates another; but in a good cause, it is better than none. A good cause, too, has a wonderful power of its own when men begin to attend to it; it asserts itself, and takes possession of souls on its own account. Rivalry becomes generous then, even if it remains; it is a race in love that is being run, and all who run obtain the prize. Competitions for prizes which only one can gain have a great deal in them that is selfish and bad; but rivalry in the service of others—rivalry in

[1] The R.V. renders *πλεονεξία* "extortion"—the *πλεονέκται* being those who *get* the money; but it seems to me more natural to render "avarice," in which case both *εὐλογία* and *πλεονεξία* apply to the Corinthians.

unselfishness—will not easily degenerate in this direction. Paul does not need to be excused because he stimulates the Macedonians by the promptitude of the Corinthians—though he had his misgivings about this last—and the Corinthians by the liberality of the Macedonians. The real motive in both cases was "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." It is this which underlies everything in the Christian heart, and nothing can do harm which works as its auxiliary.

(3) Chap. ix. 6-15. In the third and last section the Apostle resumes his direct and urgent tone. "I do not need to write to you," he seems to say, "but one thing I cannot but set down: He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully[1] shall reap also bountifully." That is the law of God, and the nature of things, whether men regard or disregard it. Charity is in a real sense an investment, not a casting away of money; it is not fruitless, but bears fruit in the measure in which it is sown. Of course it cannot be enforced—that would be to deny its very nature. Each is to give what he has purposed in his heart, where he is free and true: he is not to give out of grief, mourning over what he gives and regretting he could not keep it; neither is he to give out of necessity, because his position, or the usages of his society, or the comments of his neighbours, put a practical compulsion upon him. God loves a cheerful giver. Money is nothing to Him but as an index to the soul; unless the soul gives it, and gives itself with it, He takes no account.

[1] Ἐπ' εὐλογίαις: "so that blessings are associated therewith" (Winer): the full hand in sowing makes a full hand in reaping.

But He does take account of true charity, and because He does, the charitable may be of good cheer: He will not allow them to be without the means of manifesting a spirit so grateful to Him. If we really wish to be generous, He will not withhold from us the power of being so. This is what the Apostle says in ver. 8: "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work." There is, indeed, another way of rendering *αὐτάρκεια* (sufficiency). Some take it subjectively, not objectively, and make it mean, not sufficiency, but contentment. But though a contented spirit disposes people wonderfully to be generous, and the discontented, who have never enough for themselves, can never, of course, spare anything for anybody else, this meaning is decidedly to be rejected. The sufficiency, as ver. 10 also shows, is outward: we shall always, if we are charitable, have by God's grace the means of being more so. He is able to bless us abundantly, that we may be able for every good work. Observe the purpose of God's blessing. This is the import of the quotation from the 112th Psalm, in which we have the portrait of the good man: "He hath dispersed"—what uncalculating liberality there is in the very word—"he hath given to the poor: his righteousness abideth for ever." The approximation, in the Jewish morals of later times, of the ideas of righteousness and almsgiving, has led some to limit *δικαιοσύνη* in this passage (as in Matt. vi. 1) to the latter sense. This is extremely improbable—I think impossible. In the Psalm, both in ver. 3 and ver. 10 (LXX.), the expression "his righteousness abideth for ever" reflects God's verdict on the character as a whole. The character there described, and here re-

ferred to by the relevant trait of generosity, is one which need fear no chances of the future. He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply the seed sown by the generous Corinthians (that they may ever be in a position to be generous), and will cause also the fruits of their righteousness to grow. Their righteousness, as it figures in this last phrase, is of course represented, for the time being, by their generosity; and the poetic expression "fruits of righteousness," which is borrowed from Hosea, designates the results which that generosity produces. It is not only an investment which guarantees to them the generous care of God for their own welfare; it is a seed which bears another and more spiritual harvest. With some expansion of heart on this the Apostle concludes.

(*a*) It yields a rich harvest of thanksgiving to God. This is expressed in ver. 12, and is the principal point. It is something to fill up further the measure of a brother's needs by a timely gift, but how much more it is to change the tune of his spirit, and whereas we found him cheerless or weak in faith, to leave him gratefully praising God. True thankfulness to the Heavenly Father is an atmosphere in which all virtues flourish: and those whose charity bears fruit in this grateful spirit are benefactors of mankind to an extent which no money can estimate. It is probably forcing the Apostle's language to insist that λειτουργία, as a name for the collection, has any priestly or sacrificial reference;[1] but unfeigned charity is in its very nature

[1] Λειτουργία: for the general sense of "service," especially charitable service, quite apart from priestly associations, see Phil. ii. 25, 30: and Grimm's Lexicon.

a sacrifice of praise to God—the answer of our love to His; and it has its best effect when it evokes the thanksgivings to God of those who receive it. Wherever love is, He must be first and last.

(*b*) The charity of the Corinthians bore another spiritual fruit: in consequence of it the saints at Jerusalem were won to recognise more unreservedly the Christian standing of the Gentile brethren. This is what we read in ver. 13. Taking occasion from the proof of what you are, which this ministration of yours has given them, they glorify God "for the obedience of your confession unto the Gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution unto them and unto all." The verbal combinations possible here give free scope to the ingenuity and the caprice of grammarians; but the kind of thing meant remains plain. Once the Christians of Jerusalem had had their doubts about the Corinthians, and the other pagans who were said to have received the Gospel; they had heard marvellous reports about them certainly, but it remained to be seen on what these reports rested. They would not commit themselves hastily to any compromising relation to such outsiders. Now all their doubts have been swept away; the Gentiles have actually come to the relief of their poverty, and there is no mistaking what that means. The language of love is intelligible everywhere, and there is only One who teaches it in such relations as are involved here—Jesus Christ. Yes, once they had their doubts of you; but now they will praise God that you have obediently confessed the Gospel, and frankly owned a fellowship with them and with all. The last words mean, in effect, that the Corinthians had liberally shared what they had with them and with all; but the terms are so chosen as to

obliterate, as far as possible, all but the highest associations. This, then, is another fruit of charity : it widens the thoughts—it often improves the theology—of those who receive it. All goodness, men feel instinctively, is of God ; and they cannot condemn as godless, or even as beyond the covenant, those through whom goodness comes to them.

(*c*) Finally, among the fruits of charity is to be reckoned the direct response of brotherly love, expressed especially in intercessory prayer, and in a longing to see those on whom God's grace rests so abundantly. An unknown and distant benefactor is sometimes better than one near at hand. He is regarded simply in his character as a benefactor; we know nothing of him that can possibly discount his kindness; our mind is compelled to rest upon his virtues and remember them gratefully before God. One of the meanest experiences of human nature that we can have—and it is not an imaginary one—is to see people paying the debt of gratitude, or at least mitigating the sense of obligation, by thinking over the deficiencies in their benefactor's character. "He is better off than we are ; it is nothing to him ; and if he *is* kind to the poor, he has need to be. It will take a lot of charity to cover all he would like to hide." This revolting spirit is the extreme opposite of the intercessory prayer and brotherly yearning which St. Paul sees in his mind's eye among the saints at Jerusalem. Perhaps he saw almost more than was really to be seen. The union of hearts he aimed at was never more than imperfectly attained. But to have aimed at it was a great and generous action, and to have brought so many Gentile Churches to co-operate to this end was a magnificent service to the kingdom of God.

These "fruits" are not as yet actually borne, but to the Apostle's loving anticipation they are as good as real. They are the fruits of "the righteousness" of the Corinthians, the harvest that God has caused to grow out of their liberality. From the very beginning there have been two opinions as to what St. Paul means by the exclamation with which he closes—"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." On the one hand, it is read as if it were a part of what precedes, the unspeakable gift of God being the numberless blessings that charity yields, by God's goodness, both to those who give and to those who receive it. Paul in this case would be thinking, when he wrote, of the joy with which the Gentiles gave, and of the gratitude, the willing recognition, and the brotherly prayers and longing, with which the Jews received, help in the hour of need. These would be the unspeakable gift. On the other hand, the sentence is read as if it stood apart, not the continuation of what immediately precedes, but the overflow of the Apostle's heart in view of the whole situation. It becomes possible, then, to regard "God's unspeakable gift" as the gift of redemption in His Son —the great, original, unsearchable gift, in which everything else is included, and especially all such manifestations of brotherly love as have just been in view. Sound feeling, I think, unequivocally supports the last interpretation. The very word "unspeakable" is one of a class that Paul reserves for this particular object; the wisdom and love of God as displayed in man's salvation are unspeakable, unsearchable, passing knowledge; but nothing else is. It is to this his mind goes back, instinctively, as he contemplates what has flowed from it in the particular case before us; but it is the

great divine gift, and not its fruits in men's lives, however rich and various, that it passes the power of words to characterise. It is for it, and not for its results in Jew or Gentile, that the Apostle so devoutly thanks God.

XXII

WAR

"Now I Paul myself intreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage toward you: yea, I beseech you, that I may not when present show courage with the confidence wherewith I count to be bold against some, which count of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strong holds); casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be fulfilled."—2 Cor. x. 1-6 (R.V.).

THE last four chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians stand as manifestly apart as the two about the collection. A great deal too much has been made of this undeniable fact. If a man has a long letter to write, in which he wishes to speak of a variety of subjects, we may expect variations of tone, and more or less looseness of connexion. If he has something on his mind which it is difficult to speak about, but which cannot be suppressed, we may expect him to keep it to the end, and to introduce it, perhaps, with awkward emphasis. The scholars who have argued, on the ground of the extreme difference of tone, and want of connexion, that chaps. x.-xiii. of this Epistle were originally a separate letter, either earlier (Weisse) or later (Semler) than the first seven chapters,

seem to have overlooked these obvious considerations.[1] If Paul stopped dictating for the day at the end of chap. ix.—if he even stopped a few moments in doubt how to proceed to the critical subject he had still to handle—the want of connexion is sufficiently explained; the tone in which he writes, when we consider the subject, needs no justification. The mission of Titus had resulted very satisfactorily, so far as one special incident was concerned—the treatment of a guilty person by the Church; the tension of feeling over that case had passed by. But in the general situation of affairs at Corinth there was much to make the Apostle anxious and angry. There were Judaists at work, impugning his authority and corrupting his Gospel; there was at least a minority of the Church under their influence; there were large numbers living, apparently, in the grossest sins (chap. xii. 20 f.); there was something, we cannot but think, approaching spiritual anarchy. The one resource the Apostle has with which to encounter this situation—his one standing ground alike against the Church and those who were corrupting it—is his apostolic authority; and to the vindication of this he first addresses himself. This, I believe, explains the peculiar emphasis with which he begins: "Now I myself, I Paul intreat you." *Αὐτὸς ἐγὼ Παῦλος* is not only the grammatical subject of the sentence, but if one may say so, the subject under consideration; it is the very person whose authority is in dispute who puts himself forward deliberately in this authoritative way. The *δὲ* ("now") is merely transitional; the writer moves on, without indicating any connexion, to another matter.

[1] On Hausrath's view that this was a letter between our Ep. I. and Ep. II. see the Introduction.

In the long sentence which makes up the first and second verses, everything comes out at once—the Apostle's indignation, in that extreme personal emphasis; his restraint of it, in the appeal to the meekness and gentleness of Christ; his resentment at the misconstruction of his conduct by enemies, who called him a coward at hand, and a brave man only at a safe distance; and his resolve, if the painful necessity is not spared him, to come with a rod and not spare. It is as if all this had been dammed up in his heart for long, and to say a single word was to say everything. The appeal to the meekness and gentleness of Christ is peculiarly affecting in such a connexion; it is intended to move the Corinthians, but what we feel is how it has moved Paul. It may be needful, on occasion, to assert oneself, or at least one's authority; but it is difficult to do it without sin. It is an exhilarating sensation to human nature to be in the right, and when we enjoy it we are apt to enlist our temper in the divine service, forgetting that the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. Paul felt this danger, and in the very sentence in which he puts himself and his dignity forward with uncompromising firmness, he recalls to his own and his readers' hearts the characteristic temper of the Lord. How far He was, under the most hateful provocation, from violence and passion! How far from that sinful self-assertion, which cannot consider the case and claims of others! It is when we are in the right that we must watch our temper, and, instead of letting anger carry us away, make our appeal for the right by the meekness and gentleness of Jesus. This, when right is won, makes it twice blessed. The words, "who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage

toward you," are one of the sneers current in Corinth at Paul's expense. When he was there, his enemies said, face to face with them, he was humble enough;[1] it was only when he left them he became so brave. This mean slander must have stung the proud soul of the Apostle—the mere quotation of it shows this; but the meekness and gentleness of Christ have entered into him, and instead of resenting it he continues in a still milder tone. He descends from urging or entreating (*παρακαλῶ*) to beseeching (*δέομαι*). The thought of Christ has told already on his heart and on his pen. He begs them so to order their conduct that he may be spared the pain of demonstrating the falsehood of that charge. He counts on taking daring action against some at Corinth who count of him as though he walked after the flesh; but they can make this face-to-face hardihood needless, and in the name, not of his own cowardice, but of his Lord's meekness and considerateness, he appeals to them to do so. *Δυσφημούμενοι παρακαλοῦμεν.*

The charge of walking after the flesh is one that needs interpretation. In a general way it means that Paul was a worldly, and not a spiritual, man; and that the key to his character and conduct—even in his relations with Churches—was to be sought in his private and personal interests. What this would mean in any particular case would depend upon the circumstances. It might mean that he was actuated by avarice, and, in spite of pretences to be disinterested, was ruled at bottom by the idea of what would pay; or it might

[1] This is the only place in the New Testament where *ταπεινὸς* ("lowly") is used in a bad (contemptuous) sense: in Christian lips it is a term of praise (Matt. xi. 29); the speakers here had not learned its Christian meaning.

mean—and in this place probably does mean—that he had an undue regard for the opinion of others, and acted with feeble inconsistency in his efforts to please them. A man of whom either of these things could be truly said would be without spiritual authority, and it was to discredit the Apostle in the Church that the vague and damaging charge was made.

He certainly shows no want of courage in meeting it. That he walks *in* the flesh, he cannot deny. He is a human being, wearing the weak nature, and all its maladies are incident to him. As far as that nature goes, it is as possible that he, as that any man, should be ruled by its love of ease or popularity; or, on the other hand, should be overcome by timidity, and shrink from difficult duties. But he denies that this is his case. He spends his life *in* this nature, with all its capacity for unworthy conduct; but in his Christian warfare he is not ruled by it—he has conquered it, and it has no power over him at all. "I was with you," he wrote in the First Epistle, "with weakness and fear and much trembling"; but "my speech and my preaching were . . . with demonstration of the Spirit and of power." This is practically what he says here, and what must be said by every *man* who undertakes to do anything for *God*. No one can be half so well aware as he, if he is sincere at all, of the immense contrast between the nature in which he lives and the service to which he is called. None of his enemies can know so well as he the utter earthenness of the vessel in which the heavenly treasure is deposited. But the very meaning of a divine call is that a man is made master of this weakness, and through whatever pain and self-repression can disregard it for his work's sake. With some men timidity *is* the great trial: for them,

it is the flesh. They are afraid to declare the whole counsel of God; or they are afraid of some class, or of some particular person: they are brave with a pen perhaps, or in a pulpit, or surrounded by sympathising spectators; but it is not in them to be brave alone, and to find in the Spirit a courage and authority which overbear the weakness of the flesh. From all such timidity, as an influence affecting his apostolic work, Paul can pronounce himself free. Like Jeremiah (Jer. i. 6-8) and Ezekiel (Ezek. ii. 6-8), he is naturally capable, but spiritually incapable of it. He is full of might by the Spirit of the Lord: and when he takes the field in the Lord's service, the flesh is as though it were not. Since the expression *ἐν σαρκὶ περιπατοῦντες* refers to the whole of the Apostle's life, it seems natural to take *στρατευόμεθα* as referring to the whole of his ministry, and not solely to his present campaign against the Corinthians. It is of his apostolic labours in general—of course including that which lay immediately before him—that he says: "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God[1] to the casting down of strong holds."

Nobody but an evangelist could have written this sentence. Paul knew from experience that men fortify themselves against God: they try to find impregnable positions in which they may defy Him, and live their own life. Human nature, when God is announced to speak, instinctively puts itself on its guard; and you cannot pass that guard, as Paul was well aware, with weapons furnished by the flesh. The weapons need to be divinely strong; mighty in God's sight, for God's

[1] The dative in *δυνατὰ τῷ Θεῷ* is the same as in Jonah iii. 3, Acts vii. 20. A vague rendering like 'divinely powerful" is probably nearest the meaning.

service, with God's own might. There is an answer in this to many of the questions that are being asked at present about methods of evangelising; where the divinely powerful weapons are found, such questions give no trouble. No man who has ever had a direct and unmistakable blessing on his work as an evangelist has ever enlisted "the flesh" in God's service. No such man has ever seen, or said, that learning, eloquence, or art in the preacher; or bribes of any sort to the hearer; or approaches to the "strong holds," constructed of amusements, lectures, concerts, and so forth, were of the very slightest value. He who knows anything about the matter knows that it is a life-and-death interest which is at stake when the soul comes face to face with the claims and the mercy of God; and that the preacher who has not the hardihood to represent it as such will not be listened to, and should not be. Paul was armed with this tremendous sense of what the Gospel was—the immensity of grace in it, the awfulness of judgment; and it was this which gave him his power, and lifted him above the arts, the wisdom, and the timidity of the flesh. A man will hold his own against anything but this. He will parley with any weapon flesh can fashion or wield; this is the only one to which he surrenders.

Perhaps in the fifth verse, which is an expansion of "the casting down of strong holds," a special reference to the Corinthians begins to be felt: at all events they might easily apply it to themselves. "Casting down imaginations," the Apostle says, "and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God." "Imaginations" is probably a fair enough rendering of λογισμούς, though the margin has "reasonings," and the same word in Rom. ii. 15 is rendered "thoughts."

To what it applies is not very obvious. Men do certainly fortify themselves against the Gospel in their thoughts. The proud wisdom of the Greek was familiar to the Apostle, and even the obvious fact that it had not brought the world salvation was not sufficient to lower its pride. The expression has sometimes been censured as justifying the *sacrificium intellectus*, or as taking away freedom of thought in religion. To think of Paul censuring the free exercise of intelligence in religion is too absurd; but there is no doubt that, with his firm hold of the great facts on which the Christian faith depends, he would have dealt very summarily with theories, ancient or modern, which serve no purpose but to fortify men against the pressure of these facts. He would not have taken excessive pains to put himself in the speculator's place, and see the world as he sees it, with the most stupendous realities left out; he would not have flattered with any affected admiration that most self-complacent of mortals—the wise of this world. He would have struck straight at the heart and conscience with the spiritual weapons of the Gospel; he would have spoken of sin and judgment, of reconciliation and life in Christ, till these great realities had asserted their greatness in the mind, and in doing so had shattered the proud intellectual structures which had been reared in ignorance or contempt of them. "Thoughts" and "imaginations" must yield to things, and make room for them: it was on this principle Paul wrought. And to "thoughts" or "imaginations" he adds "every high thing [ὕψωμα] that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." The emphasis is on "every"; the Apostle generalises the opposition which he has to encounter. It may not be so much in the "thoughts"

of men, as in their tempers, that they fortify themselves. Pride, which by the instinct of self-preservation sees at once to the heart of the Gospel, and closes itself against it; which hates equally the thought of absolute indebtedness to God and the thought of standing on the same level with others in God's sight,—this pride raises in every part of our nature its protest against the great surrender. It is implied in the whole structure of this passage that "the knowledge of God" against which every high thing in man rises defiantly is a humbling knowledge. In other words, it is not speculative merely, but has an ethical significance, which the human heart is conscious of even at a distance, and makes ready to acknowledge or to resist. No high thing lifts itself up in us against a mere theorem—a doctrine of God which is as a doctrine in algebra; it is the practical import of knowing God which excites the rebellion of the soul. No doubt, for the Apostle, the knowledge of God was synonymous with the Gospel: it was the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ; it was concentrated in the Cross and the Throne of His Son, in the Atonement and the Sovereignty of Christ. The Apostle had to beat down all the barriers by which men closed their minds against this supreme revelation; he had to win for these stupendous facts a place in the consciousness of humanity answering to their grandeur. *Their* greatness made *him* great: he was lifted up on them; and though he walked in the flesh, in weakness and fear and much trembling, he could confront undaunted the pride and the wisdom of the world, and compel them to acknowledge his Lord.

This meaning is brought out more precisely in the words with which he continues—"bringing every

thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." If we suppose a special reference here to the Corinthians, it will be natural to take *νόημα* ("thought") in a practical sense—as, *e.g.*, in chap. ii. 11, where it is rendered "devices." The Corinthians had notions of their own, apparently, about how a Church should be regulated—wild, undisciplined, disorderly notions; and in the absence of the Apostle they were experimenting with them freely. It is part of his work to catch these runaway thoughts, and make them obedient to Christ again. It seems, however, much more natural to allow the wider reference of *αἰχμαλωτίζοντες* to the whole of Paul's apostolic work; and then *νόημα* also will be taken in a less restricted sense. Men's minds, and all that goes on in their minds (*νοήματα* covers both: see chaps. ii. 11, iii. 14, iv. 4), are by nature lawless: they are without the sense of responsibility to guard and consecrate the sense of freedom. When the Gospel makes them captive, this lawless liberty comes to an end. The mind, in all its operations, comes under law to Christ: in its every thought it is obedient to Him. The supremacy which Christ claims and exercises is over the whole nature: the Christian man feels that nothing—not even a thought—lies beyond the range in which obedience is due to Him. This practical conviction will not paralyse thinking in the very least, but it will extinguish many useless and bad thoughts, and give their due value to all.

The Apostle descends unmistakably from the general to the particular in ver. 6: "Being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience is flufilled." Apparently what he contemplates in Corinth is a disobedience which in part at least will refuse to surrender to Christ. There is a spirit abroad there,

in the Judaists especially, and in those whom they have influenced, which will not bend, and must be broken. How Paul means to take vengeance on it, he does not say. He is confident himself that the divinely powerful weapons which he wields will enable him to master it, and that is enough. Whatever the shape the disobedience may assume,—hostility to the Gospel of Paul, as subversive of the law; hostility to his apostolic claims, as unequal to those of the Twelve; hostility to the practical authority he asserted in Churches of his founding, and to the moral ideals he established there,—whatever the face which opposition may present, he declares himself ready to humble it. One limitation only he imposes on himself—he will do this, "when the obedience of the Corinthians is fulfilled." He expressly distinguishes the Church as a whole from those who represent or constitute the disobedient party. There have been misunderstandings between the Church and himself; but as chaps. i. to vii. show, these have been so far overcome: the body of the Church has reconciled itself to its founder; it has returned, so to speak, to its allegiance to Paul, and has busied itself in carrying out his will. When this process, at present only in course, is completed, his way will be clear. He will be able to act with severity and decision against those who have troubled the Church, without running any risk of hurting the Church itself. This leads again to the reflection that, with all his high consciousness of spiritual power, with all his sense of personal wrong, the most remarkable characteristic of Paul is love. He waits to the last moment before he resorts to severer measures; and he begs those who may suffer from them, begs them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, to spare him such pain.

XXIII

COMPARISONS

"Ye look at the things that are before your face. If any man trusteth in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he is Christ's, so also are we. For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning our authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for casting you down), I shall not be put to shame: that I may not seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. For, His letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account. Let such a one reckon this, that, what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *are we* also in deed when we are present. For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves: but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding. But we will not glory beyond *our* measure, but according to the measure of the province which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even unto you. For we stretch not ourselves overmuch, as though we reached not unto you: for we came even as far as unto you in the Gospel of Christ: not glorying beyond *our* measure, *that is*, in other men's labours; but having hope that, as your faith groweth, we shall be magnified in you according to our province unto *further* abundance, so as to preach the Gospel even unto the parts beyond you, *and* not to glory in another's province in regard of things ready to our hand. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."—2 Cor. x. 7-18 (R.V.).

THIS passage abounds with grammatical and textual difficulties, but the general import and the purpose of it are plain. The self-assertion of *αὐτὸς ἐγὼ Παῦλος* (ver. 1) receives its first interpretation and expansion

here: we see what it is that Paul claims, and we begin to see the nature of the opposition against which his claim has to be made good. Leaving questions of grammatical construction aside, vv. 7 and 8 define the situation; and it is convenient to take them as if they stood alone.

There was a person in Corinth—more than one indeed, but one in particular, as the τις in ver. 7 and the singular φησὶν[1] in ver. 10 suggest—who claimed to be Christ's, or of Christ, in a sense which disparaged and was meant to disparage Paul. If we use the plural, to include them all, we must not suppose that they are identical with the party in the Church who are censured in the First Epistle for saying, "I am of Christ," just as others said, "I am of Paul," "I am of Apollos," "I am of Cephas." That party may have been dependent upon them, but the individuals here referred to are taxed with an exclusiveness and arrogance, and in the close of the chapter with a wanton trespassing on Paul's province, which show that they were not native to the Church, but intruders into it. They were confident that they were Christ's in a sense which discredited Paul's apostleship, and entitled them, so to speak, to legitimate a Church which his labours had called into being. Everything compels us to recognise in them Jewish Christians, who had been connected with Christ in a way in which Paul had not; who had known Him in the flesh, or had brought recommendatory letters from the Mother Church at Jerusalem; and who, on the strength of these accidents, gave themselves airs of superiority in Pauline Churches, and corrupted the simplicity of the Pauline Gospel.

[1] This is the reading adopted by Westcott and Hort with most MSS. except B.

The first words in ver. 7—*τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε*—are no doubt directed to this situation, but they have been very variously rendered. Our Authorised Version has, "Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?" That is, "Are you really imposed upon by the pretensions of these men, by their national and carnal distinctions, as if these had anything to do with the Gospel?" This is a good Pauline idea, but it is doubtful whether *τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον* can yield it. The natural sense of these words is, "What is before your face." The Revised Version accordingly renders, "Ye look at the things that are before your face": meaning, apparently, "You allow yourselves to be carried away by whatever is nearest to you—at present, by these interloping Jews, and the claims they flaunt before your eyes." It seems to me more natural, with many good scholars, to take *βλέπετε*, in spite of its unemphatic position, as imperative: "Look at the things which are before your faces! The most obvious and palpable facts discredit these Judaists and accredit me. A claim to be Christ's is not to be made out *à priori* by any carnal prerogatives, or any human recommendations; it is only made out by this—that Christ Himself attests it by giving him who makes it success as an evangelist. Look at what confronts you! There is not a single Christian thing you see which is not Christ's own testimony that I am His; unless you are senseless and blind, my position and authority as an apostle can never be impugned among you." The argument is thus the same as that which he uses in chap. iii. 1-3, and in the First Epistle, chap. ix. 2.

At first Paul asserts only a bare equivalence to his Jewish opponent: "Let him consider this with himself, that, *even as* he is Christ's, *so also* are we." The

historical, outward connexion with Christ, whatever it may have been, amounted in this relation to exactly nothing at all. Not what Christ was, but what He is, is the life and reality of the Christian religion. Not an accidental acquaintance with Him as He lived in Galilee or Jerusalem, but a spiritual fellowship with Him as He reigns in the heavenly places, makes a Christian. Not a letter written by human hands—though they should be the hands of Peter or James or John—legitimates a man in the apostolic career; but only the sovereign voice which says, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name." Neither as Christian nor as apostle can one establish a monopoly by making his appeal to "the flesh." The application of this Christian truth has constantly to be made anew, for human nature loves a monopoly; it does not seem really to have a thing, unless its possession of it is exclusive. We are all too ready to unchurch, or unchristianise, others; to say, "*We* are Christ's," with an emphasis which means that others are not. Churches with a strong organisation are especially tempted to this unchristian narrowness and pride. Their members think almost instinctively of other Christians as outsiders and inferiors; they would like to take them in, to reordain their ministers, to reform their constitution, to give validity to their sacraments—in one word, to legitimate them as Christians and as Christian societies. All this is mere unintelligence and arrogance. Legitimacy is a convenient and respectable political fiction; but to make the constitution of any Christian body, which has developed under the pressure of historical exigences, the law for the legitimation of Christian life, ministry, and worship everywhere, is to deny the essential character of the Christian religion. It is to play toward

men whom Christ has legitimated by His Spirit, and by His blessing on their work, precisely the part which the Judaisers played toward Paul; and to compromise with it is to betray Christ, and to renounce the freedom of the Spirit.

But the Apostle does not stop short with claiming a bare equality with his rivals. "For though[1] I should boast somewhat more abundantly concerning our authority . . . I shall not be put to shame"—*i.e.*, "The facts I have invited you to look at will bear me out." The key to this passage is to be found in 1 Cor. xv. 15, where he boasts that, though the least of the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle, he had, through the grace of God given to him, laboured more abundantly than all the rest. If it came to comparison, then, of the attestation which Christ gave to their several labours, and so to their authority, by success in evangelising, it would not be Paul who would have to hide his head. But he does not choose to boast any more of his authority at this point. He has no desire to clothe himself in terrors; on the contrary, he wishes to avoid[2] the very appearance of scaring them out of their wits by his letters (for ἐκφοβεῖν compare Mark ix. 6; Heb. xii. 21). His authority has been given him, not for the pulling down, but for the building up, of the Church; it is not lordly (chap. i. 24), but ministerial; and he would

[1] The difficult τε in ἐάν τε γὰρ is most easily explained by the ellipse of a corresponding καί: of several reasons he might adduce, Paul adduces only one (Schmiedel).

[2] The ninth verse, Ἵνα μὴ δόξω κ.τ.λ., is most naturally taken with what precedes, and most simply explained by supplying something like, "but I say no more about it, *i.e.* about my authority, that I may not seem," etc. To say more would look like trying to frighten them. Others make it protasis to ver. 11, ver. 10 being then a parenthesis.

wish, not only to show it in kindly service, but also in a kindly aspect. "Not for casting down," in ver. 8, is no contradiction of "mighty for casting down" in ver. 4: the object in the two cases is quite different. Many *things* in man must be cast down—many high thoughts, much pride, much wilfulness, much presumption and sufficiency—but the casting down of these is the building up of souls.

At this point comes what is logically a parenthesis, and we hear in it the criticisms passed at Corinth on Paul, and his own reply to them. "His letters," they say (or, he says), "are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence weak, and his speech of no account." The last part of this criticism has been much misunderstood; it is really of moral import, but has been read in a physical sense. It does not say anything at all about the Apostle's physique, or about his eloquence or want of eloquence; it tells us that (according to these critics), when he was actually present at Corinth, he was somehow or other ineffective; and when he spoke there, people simply disregarded him. An uncertain tradition no doubt represents Paul as an infirm and meagre person, and it is easy to believe that to Greeks he must sometimes have seemed embarrassed and incoherent in speech to the last degree (what, for instance, could have seemed more formless to a Greek than vv. 12-18 of this chapter?): nevertheless, it is nothing like this which is in view here. The criticism is not of his physique, nor of his style, but of his personality—what is described is not his appearance nor his eloquence, but the effect which the man produced when he went to Corinth and spoke. It was nothing. As a man, bodily present, he could get nobody there: he talked, and nobody listened. It is

implied that this criticism is false; and Paul bids any one who makes it consider that what he is in word by letters when he is absent, that he will also be in deed when he is present. The double *rôle* of potent pamphleteer and ineffective pastor is not for him.

The kind of criticism which was here passed on St. Paul is one to which every preacher is obnoxious. An epistle is, so to speak, the man's words without the man; and such is human weakness, that they are often stronger than the man speaking in bodily presence, that is, than the man and his words together. The character of the speaker, as it were, discounts all he says; and when he is there, and delivers his message in person, the message itself suffers an immense depreciation. This ought not so to be, and with a man who cultivates sincerity will not so be. He will be, himself, as good as his words; his effectiveness will be the same whether he writes or speaks. Nothing ultimately counts in the work of a Christian minister but what he can say and do and get done when in direct contact with living men. In many cases the modern sermon really answers to the epistle as it is referred to in this sarcastic comment; in the pulpit, people say, the minister is impressive and memorable; but in the ordinary intercourse of life, and even in the pastoral relation, where he has to meet people on an equal footing, his power quite disappears. He is an ineffective person, and his words have no weight. Where this is true, there is something very far wrong; and though it was not true in the case of Paul, there are cases in which it is. To bring the pastoral up to the level of the pulpit work—the care of individual souls and characters to the intensity and earnestness of study

and preaching—would be the saving of many a minister and many a congregation.[1]

But to return to the text. The Apostle is disinclined to pursue this line further: in defending himself against these obscure detractors, he can hardly avoid the appearance of self-commendation, which of all things he abhors. An acute observer has remarked that when war lasts long the opposing combatants borrow each other's weapons and tactics: and it was this uninviting weapon that the policy of his opponents laid to the Apostle's hand. With ironical recognition of their hardihood, he declines it: "We are not bold—have not the courage—to number ourselves among, or compare ourselves with, certain of them that commend themselves"—*i.e.*, the Judaists who had introduced themselves to the Church. "Far be it from me," says the Apostle grimly, "to claim a place among, or near, such a distinguished company." But he is too much in earnest to prolong the ironical strain, and in the verses which follow, from 12 to 16, he states in good set terms the differences between himself and them. (1) They measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves, and in so doing are without understanding.[2] They constitute a religious coterie, a sort of clique or ring in the Church, ignoring all but themselves, making themselves the only standard

[1] The following sentence from a letter of H. E. M. (a sister of James Mozley's) is an interesting illustration of this truth: "I consider Mr. Rickards as the type and model of a country parish and domestic priest. *All* his powers and energies are expended on and exerted for teaching, preaching, and talking. *Bodily presence is his vocation:* unlike some, writers and others, he must be seen to be felt; and unlike others again, writers and others, the more he is seen, the more he is felt."

[2] See note, p. 311.

of what is Christian, and betraying, by that very proceeding, their want of sense. There is a fine liberality about this sharp saying, and it is as necessary now as in the first century. Men coalesce, within the limits of the Christian community, from affinities of various kinds—sympathy for a type or an aspect of doctrine, or liking for a form of polity; and as it is easy, so is it common, for those who have drifted like to like, to set up their own associations and preferences as the only law and model for all. They take the air of superior persons, and the penalty of the superior person is to be unintelligent. They are without understanding. The standard of the coterie—be it "evangelical," "high church," "broad church," or what you please—is not the standard of God; and to measure all things by it is not only sinful but stupid. In contrast to this Judaistic clique, who saw no Christianity except under their own colours, Paul's standard is to be found in the actual working of God through the Gospel. He would have said with Ignatius, only with a deeper insight into every word, "Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." (2) Another point of difference is this: Paul works independently as an evangelist; it has always been his rule to break new ground. God has assigned him a province to labour in, large enough to gratify the highest ambition; he is not going beyond it, nor exaggerating his authority, when he asserts his apostolic dignity in Corinth; the Corinthians know as well as he that he came all the way to them, and was the first to come, ministering the Gospel of Christ. Nay, it is only the weakness of their faith that keeps him from going farther: and he has hope that as their faith grows it will set him free to carry the Gospel beyond them to Italy and Spain; this would be the crowr

of his greatness as an evangelist, and it depends *on them* (ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι) whether he is to win it; in any case, the winning of it would be in harmony with his vocation, the carrying of it out in glorious fulness (κατὰ τὸν κανόνα εἰς περισσείαν); for, like John Wesley, he could say the whole world was his parish. If he boasts at all, it is not immeasurably; it is on the basis of the gift and calling of God, within the limits of what God has wrought by him and by no other; he never intrudes into another's province and boasts of what he finds done to his hand. But this was what the Jews did. They did not propagate the Gospel with apostolic enthusiasm among the heathen; they waited till Paul had done the hard preliminary work, and formed Christian congregations everywhere, and then they slunk into them—in Galatia, in Macedonia, in Achaia—talking as if these Churches were *their* work, disparaging their real father in Christ, and claiming to complete and legitimate—which meant, in effect, to subvert—his work. No wonder Paul was scornful, and did not venture to put himself in a line with such heroes.

Two feelings are compounded all through this passage: an intense sympathy with the purpose of God that the Gospel should be preached to every creature—Paul's very soul melts into that; and an intense scorn for the spirit that sneaks and poaches on another's ground, and is more anxious that some men should be good sectarians than that all men should be good disciples. This evil spirit Paul loathes, just as Christ loathed it; the temper of these verses is that in which the Master cried, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more

a son of hell than yourselves." Of course the evil spirit must always be disguised, both from others and from itself: the proselytiser assumes the garb of the evangelist; but the proselytiser turned evangelist is the purest example in the world of Satan disguised as an angel of light. The show is divine, but the reality is diabolical. It does not matter what the special sectarianism is: the proselytising of a hierarchical Church, and the proselytising of the Plymouth Brethren, are alike dishonourable and alike condemned. And the safeguard of the soul against this base spirit is an interest like Paul's in the Christianising of those who do not know Christ at all. Why should Churches compete? why should their agencies overlap? why should they steal from each other's folds? why should they be anxious to seal all believers with their private seal, when the whole world lies in wickedness? That field is large enough for all the efforts of all evangelists, and till it has been sown with the good seed from end to end there can be nothing but reprobation for those who trespass on the province of others, and boast that they have made their own what they certainly did not make Christ's.

At the close, to borrow Bengel's expression, Paul sounds a retreat. He has liberated his mind about his adversaries—always a more or less dangerous process; and after the excitement and self-assertion are over, he composes it again in the presence of God. He checks himself, we feel, with that Old Testament word, "Now he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. I *have* always broken new ground; I *have* come as far as you, and wish to go farther, evangelising; I never *have* boasted of another man's labours as if they were mine, or claimed the credit of what he had done; but

all this is mine only as God's gift. It is His grace bestowed on me, and not in vain. I would not boast except in Him; for not he who commends himself is approved, but only he whom the Lord commends." No character which is only self-certificated can stand the test: no claim to apostolic dignity and authority can be maintained which the Lord does not attest by granting apostolic success.

Note on vv. 12 and 13.—In some MSS. (D*, F, G, 109, It., and some Latins) the last two words of ver. 12 and the first two of ver. 13 (*οὐ συνιᾶσιν· ἡμεῖς δέ*) are omitted. Most editors of the text (Tischdf. viii., Tregelles, Westcott and Hort) seem to think the omission accidental; among exegetes, the fact that it yields an easy and natural, though of course a quite different, sense, has caused some hesitation. Thus Bengel, and recently Schmiedel, reject the words. The latter renders the whole passage: "We do not venture to put ourselves on a level, or to compare ourselves, with certain of those who commend themselves; but in measuring ourselves by ourselves, and comparing ourselves with ourselves, we shall not boast beyond measure, but according to the measure of the rule," etc. This is no doubt intelligible and appropriate enough, and certainly one's first impression is that *ἀλλ' αὐτοί* in ver. 12 ought to refer to Paul; but as the meaning yielded by the passage with the four words included is equally appropriate, and their insertion immeasurably harder to understand than their omission, it seems preferable to let them stand, in the sense explained above. They are found (with the variation of *συνίσασιν* for *συνιᾶσιν* in ℵ*) in ℵ**, B, minusc. Theodoret: in E, K, L, P, the form is *συνιοῦσιν*. Apparently it is only by an accident that their omission leaves good sense.

XXIV

GODLY JEALOUSY

"Would that ye could bear with me in a little foolishness: nay indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you *as* a pure virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or *if* ye receive a different spirit, which ye did not receive, or a different gospel, which ye did not accept, ye do well to bear with *him*. For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though *I be* rude in speech, yet *am I* not in knowledge; nay, in everything we have made *it* manifest among all men to you-ward."—2 Cor. xi. 1-6 (R.V.).

ALL through the tenth chapter there is a conflict in the Apostle's mind. He is repeatedly, as it were, on the verge of doing something, from which he as often draws back. He does not like to boast—he does not like to speak of himself at all—but the tactics of his enemies, and the faithlessness of the Corinthians, are making it inevitable. In chap. xi. he takes the plunge. He adopts the policy of his adversaries, and proceeds to enlarge on his services to the Church; but with magnificent irony, he first assumes the mask of a fool. It is not the genuine Paul who figures here; it is Paul playing a part to which he has been compelled against his will, acting

in a character which is as remote as possible from his own. It is the character native and proper to the other side; and when Paul, with due deprecation, assumes it for the nonce, he not only preserves his modesty and his self-respect, but lets his opponents see what he thinks of them. He plays the fool for the occasion, and of set purpose; they do it always, and without knowing it, like men to the manner born.

But it is the Corinthians who are directly addressed. "Would that ye could bear with me in a little foolishness: nay indeed bear with me." In the last clause, *ἀνέχεσθε* may be either imperative (as the Revised Version gives it in the text), or indicative (as in the margin: "but indeed ye do bear with me"). The use of *ἀλλὰ* rather favours the last; and it would be quite in keeping with the extremely ironical tone of the passage to render it so. Even in the First Epistle, Paul had reflected on the self-conceit of the Corinthians: "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ." That self-conceit led them to think lightly of him, but not just to cast him off; they still tolerated him as a feeble sort of person: "Ye do indeed bear with me." But whichever alternative be preferred, the irony passes swiftly into the dead earnest of the second verse: "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you *as* a pure virgin to Christ."

This is the ground on which Paul claims their forbearance, even when he indulges in a little "folly." If he is guilty of what seems to them extravagance, it is the extravagance of jealousy—*i.e.*, of love tormented by fear. Nor is it any selfish jealousy, of which he ought to be ashamed. He is not anxious about his private or personal interests in the Church. He is

not humiliated and provoked because his former pupils have come to their spiritual majority, and asserted their independence of their master. These are common dangers and common sins; and every minister needs to be on his guard against them. Paul's jealousy over the Corinthians was "a jealousy of God"; God had put it into his heart, and what it had in view was God's interest in them. It distressed him to think, not that his personal influence at Corinth was on the wane, but that the work which God had done in their souls was in danger of being frustrated, the inheritance He had acquired in them of being lost. Nothing but God's interest had been in the Apostle's mind from the beginning. "I betrothed you," he says, "to *one* husband"—the emphasis lies on *one*—"that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ."[1]

It is the Church collectively which is represented by the pure virgin, and it ought to be observed that this is the constant use in Scripture, alike in the Old Testament and the New. It is Israel as a whole which is married to the Lord; it is the Christian Church as a whole (or a Church collectively, as here) which is the Bride, the Lamb's wife. To individualise the figure, and speak of Christ as the Bridegroom of the soul, is not Scriptural, and almost always misleads. It introduces the language and the associations of natural affection into a region where they are entirely out of place; we have no terms of endearment here, and should have none, but high thoughts of the simplicity, the purity, and the glory of the Church. Glory is especially suggested by the idea of "*presenting*" the

[1] "Woods, trees, meadows, and hills are my witnesses that I drew on a fair match betwixt Christ and Anwoth."—S. RUTHERFORD.

Church to Christ. The presentation takes place when Christ comes again to be glorified in His saints; that great day shines unceasingly in the Apostle's heart, and all he does is done in its light. The infinite issues of fidelity and infidelity to the Lord, as that day makes them manifest, are ever present to his spirit; and it is this which gives such divine intensity to his feelings wherever the conduct of Christians is concerned. He sees everything, not as dull eyes see it now, but as Christ in His glory will show it then. And it takes nothing less than this to keep the soul absolutely pure and loyal to the Lord.

The Apostle explains in the third verse the nature of his alarm. "I fear," he says, "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity [and the purity][1] which is toward Christ." The whole figure is very expressive. "Simplicity" means singleness of mind; the heart of the "pure virgin" is undivided; she ought not to have, and will not have, a thought for any but the "one man" to whom she is betrothed. "Purity" again is, as it were, one species of "simplicity"; it is "simplicity" as shown in the keeping of the whole nature unspotted for the Lord. What Paul dreads is the spiritual seduction of the Church, the winning away of her heart from absolute loyalty to Christ. The serpent beguiled Eve by his craftiness; he took advantage of her unsuspecting innocence to wile her away

[1] The words *καὶ τῆς ἁγνότητος* are bracketed by Westcott and Hort. They are very strongly attested (by ℵ, B, F, gr., G, etc.); but as they are found in some authorities *before*, instead of *after*, *τῆς ἁπλότητος*, it is not improbable that they may be a gloss on these last words, suggested by *ἁγνὴν* in ver. 2, and incorporated in the text. They rather blur than emphasise the thought.

from her simple belief in God and obedience to Him. When she took into her mind the suspicions he raised, her "simplicity" was gone, and her "purity" followed. The serpent's agents—the servants of Satan, as Paul calls them in ver. 15—are at work in Corinth; and he fears that their craftiness may seduce the Church from its first simple loyalty to Christ. It is natural for us to take ἁπλότης and ἁγνότης in a purely ethical sense, but it is by no means certain that this is all that is meant; indeed, if καὶ τῆς ἁγνότητος be a gloss, as seems not improbable, ἁπλότης may well have a different application. "The simplicity which is toward Christ," from which he fears lest by any means "their *minds*" or "*thoughts*" be corrupted, will rather be their whole-hearted acceptance of Christ as Paul conceived of Him and preached Him, their unreserved, unquestioning surrender to that form of doctrine (τύπον διδαχῆς, Rom. vi. 17) to which they had been delivered. This, of course, in Paul's mind, involved the other—there is no separation of doctrine and practice for him; but it makes a theological rather than an ethical interest the predominant one; and this interpretation, it seems to me, coheres best with what follows, and with the whole preoccupation of the Apostle in this passage. The people whose influence he feared were not unbelievers, nor were they immoral; they professed to be Christians, and indeed better Christians than Paul; but their whole conception of the Gospel was at variance with his; if they made way at Corinth, his work would be undone. The Gospel which he preached would no longer have that unsuspicious acceptance; the Christ whom he proclaimed would no longer have that unwavering loyalty; instead of simplicity and purity, the heart of the "pure virgin" would be possessed by misgivings, hesitations, perhaps

by out-right infidelity; his hope of presenting her to Christ on the great day would be gone.

This is what we are led to by ver. 4, one of the most vexed passages in the New Testament. The text of the last word is uncertain: some read the imperfect *ἀνείχεσθε*; others, including our Revisers, the present *ἀνέχεσθε*. The last is the better attested, and suits best the connexion of thought. The interpretations may be divided into two classes. First, there are those which assume that the suppositions made in this verse are not true. This is evidently the intention in our Authorised Version. It renders, "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, *ye might well bear with him.*" But—we must interpolate—nothing of this sort has really taken place; for Paul counts himself not a whit inferior to the very chiefest Apostles. No one—not even Peter or James or John—could have imparted anything to the Corinthians which Paul had failed to impart; and hence their spiritual seduction, no matter how or by whom accomplished, was perfectly unreasonable and gratuitous. This interpretation, with variations in detail which need not be pursued, is represented by many of the best expositors, from Chrysostom to Meyer. "If," says Chrysostom in his paraphrase, "if we had omitted anything that should have been said, and they had made up the omission, we do not forbid you to attend to them. But if everything has been perfectly done on our part, and no blank left, how did they [the Apostle's adversaries] get hold of you?" This is the broad result of many discussions; and it is usual—though not invariable—for those who read the passage thus to take *τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων* in

a complimentary, not a contemptuous, sense, and to refer it, as Chrysostom expressly does, to the three pillars of the primitive Church.

The objections to this interpretation are obvious enough. There is first the grammatical objection, that a hypothetical sentence, with the present indicative in the protasis (*εἰ . . . κηρύσσει, εἰ . . . λαμβάνετε*), and the present indicative in the apodosis (*ἀνέχεσθε*), can by no plausibility of argument be made to mean, "If the interloper *were* preaching another Jesus . . . you *would* be right to bear with him." Even if the imperfect is the true reading, which is improbable, this translation is unjustified.[1] But there is a logical as well as a grammatical objection. The use of *γὰρ* ("for") surely implies that in the sentence which it introduces we are to find the reason for what precedes. Paul is afraid, he has told us, lest the Church should be seduced from the one husband to whom he has betrothed her. But he can never mean to explain a *real* fear by making a number of *imaginary* suppositions; and so we must find in the hypothetical clauses here the *real* grounds of his alarm. People had come to Corinth—*ὁ ἐρχόμενος* is no doubt collective,

[1] It is worth appending two ingenious notes on this. Bengel, who holds that the suppositions are untrue, says: "Ponit conditionem, ex parte rei, impossibilem; ideo dicit in imperfecto *toleraretis*: sed pro conatu pseudo-apostolorum, non modo possibilem, sed plane præsentem; ideo dicit in præsenti, *prædicat.*" Schmiedel, who holds that the suppositions are true, explains the impft. by saying that Paul resolved, while dictating, to add the apodosis *in the historical tense* to the timeless protasis, because the fact which it described actually lay before him. They *were tolerating* the other teachers: that is why Paul says *ἀνείχεσθε*. He happily compares Plato, *Apol.*, 33 A.: *Εἰ δέ τίς μου λέγοντος . . . ἐπιθυμεῖ ἀκούειν . . . οὐδενὶ πώποτε ἐφθόνησα.* Still, he prefers the present.

and characterises the troublers of the Church as intruders, not native to it, but separable from it—doing all the things here supposed. Paul has espoused the Church to *One* Husband; they preach *another* Jesus. Not, of course, a distinct Person, but certainly a distinct conception of the same Person. Paul's Christ was the Son of God, the Lord of Glory, He who by His death on the cross became Universal Redeemer, and by His ascension Universal Lord—the end of the law, the giver of the Spirit; it would be another Jesus if the intruders preached only the Son of David, or the Carpenter of Nazareth, or the King of Israel. According to the conception of Christ, too, would be "the spirit" which accompanied this preaching, the characteristic temper and power of the religion it proclaimed. The spirit ministered by Paul in his apostolic work was one of power, and love, and, above all things, liberty; it emancipated the soul from weakness, from scruples, from moral inability, from slavery to sin and law; but the spirit generated by the Judaising ministry, the characteristic temper of the religion it proclaimed, was servile and cowardly. It was a spirit of bondage tending always to fear (Rom. viii. 15). Their whole gospel—to give their preaching a name it did not deserve (Gal. i. 6-9)—was something entirely unlike Paul's both in its ideas and in its spiritual fruits. Unlike—yes, and immeasurably inferior, and yet in spite of this the Corinthians put up with it well enough. This is the plain fact (*ἀνέχεσθε*) which the Apostle plainly states. *He* had to plead for their toleration, but they had no difficulty in tolerating men who by a spurious gospel, an unspiritual conception of Christ, and an unworthy incapacity for understanding freedom, were undermining his work, and seducing their souls.

No wonder he was jealous, and angry, and scornful, when he saw the true Christian religion, which has all time and all nations for its inheritance, in danger of being degraded into a narrow Jewish sectarianism; the kingdom of the Spirit lost in a society in which race gave a prerogative, and carnal ordinances were revived; and, worse still, Christ the Son of God, the Universal Reconciler, known only "after the flesh," and appropriated to a race, instead of being exalted as Lord of all, in whom there is no room for Greek or Jew, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free. The Corinthians bore with this nobly (καλῶς); but he who had begotten them in the true Gospel had to beg them to bear with him.

There is only one difficulty in this interpretation, and that is not a serious one: it is the connexion of ver. 5 with what precedes. Those who connect it immediately with ver. 4 are obliged to supply something: for example, "But you *ought* not to bear with them, for I consider that I am in nothing behind the very chiefest apostles." I have no doubt at all that οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι—the superlative apostles—are *not* Peter, James, and John, but the teachers aimed at in ver. 4, the ψευδαπόστολοι of ver. 13; it is with them, and not with the Twelve or the eminent Three, that Paul is comparing himself.[1] But even so, I agree with Weizsäcker that the connexion for the γὰρ in ver. 5 must be sought further back—as far back, indeed, as ver. 1. "You bear well

[1] It is gratuitous to drag in a reference to the first Apostles, and then to suppose the Corinthians drawing the inference—"if he is not inferior to them, still less is he inferior to our new teachers." Such an inference depends on a traditional conception of apostleship which the Corinthians were not likely to share, and it is equally unnecessary and improbable.

enough with them, and so you may well bear with me, as I beg you to do; for I consider," etc. This is effective enough, and brings us back again to the main subject. If there is a point in which Paul is willing to concede his inferiority to these superlative apostles, it is the non-essential one of utterance. He grants that he is rude in speech—not rhetorically gifted or trained—a plain, blunt man who speaks right on. But he is not rude in knowledge: in every respect he has made *that* manifest, among all men, toward them. The last clause is hardly intelligible, and the text is insecure.[1] The reading φανερώσαντες is that of all the critical editors; the object may either be indefinite (his competence in point of knowledge), or, more precisely, τὴν γνῶσιν itself, supplied from the previous clause. In no point whatever, under no circumstances, has Paul ever failed to exhibit to the Corinthians the whole truth of God in the Gospel. This it is which makes him scornful even when he thinks of the men whom the Corinthians are preferring to himself.

When we look from the details of this passage to its scope, some reflections are suggested, which have their application still.

(1) Our conception of the Person of Christ determines our conception of the whole Christian religion. What we have to proclaim to men as gospel—what we have to offer to them as the characteristic temper and virtue of the life which the Gospel originates—depends on the answer we give to Jesus' own question, "Whom say ye that I am?" A Christ who is simply human cannot be to men what a Christ is who is truly divine.

[1] Probably either ἐν παντὶ or ἐν πᾶσιν, the latter of which is omitted in some authorities, is a gloss.

The Gospel identified with Him cannot be the same; the spirit of the society which gathers round Him cannot be the same. It is futile to ask whether such a gospel and such a spirit can fairly be called Christian; they are in point of fact quite other things from the Gospel and the Spirit which are historically associated with the name. It is plain from this passage that the Apostle attached the utmost importance to his conceptions of the Person and Work of the Lord: ought not this to give pause to those who evacuate his theology of many of its distinctive ideas—especially that of the Pre-existence of Christ—on the plea that they are merely theologoumena of an individual Christian, and that to discard them leaves the Gospel unaffected? Certainly this was not what he thought. Another Jesus meant another spirit, another gospel—to use modern words, another religion and another religious consciousness; and *any* other, the Apostle was perfectly sure, came short of the grandeur of the truth. The spirit of the passage is the same with that in Gal. i. 6 ff., where he erects the Gospel he has preached as the standard of absolute religious truth. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema."

(2) "The simplicity that is toward Christ"—the simple acceptance of the truth about Him, and undivided loyalty of heart to Him—may be corrupted by influences originating within, as well as without, the Church. The infidelity which is subtlest, and most to be dreaded, is not the gross materialism or atheism which will not

so much as hear the name of God or Christ; but that which uses all sacred names, speaking readily of Jesus, the Spirit, and the Gospel, but meaning something else, and something less, than these words meant in apostolic lips. This it was which alarmed the jealous love of Paul; this it is, in its insidious influence, which constitutes one of the most real perils of Christianity at the present time. The Jew in the first century, who reduced the Person and Work of Christ to the scale of his national prejudices, and the theologian in the nineteenth, who discounts apostolic ideas when they do not suit the presuppositions of his philosophy, are open to the same suspicion, if they do not fall under the same condemnation. True thoughts about Christ—in spite of all the smart sayings about theological subtleties which have nothing to do with piety—are essential to the very existence of the Christian religion.

(3) There is no comparison between the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ His Son and any other religion. The science of comparative religion is interesting as a science; but a Christian may be excused for finding the religious use of it tiresome. There is nothing true in any of the religions which is not already in his possession. He never finds a moral idea, a law of the spiritual life, a word of God, in any of them, to which he cannot immediately offer a parallel, far more simple and penetrating, from the revelation of Christ. He has no interest in disparaging the light by which millions of his fellow-creatures have walked, generation after generation, in the mysterious providence of God; but he sees no reason for pretending that that light—which Scripture calls darkness and the shadow of death—can bear comparison with the radiance in which he lives. "If," he might say, misapplying the fourth verse—"if

they brought us another saviour, another spirit, another gospel, we might be religiously interested in them; but, as it is, we have everything already, and they, in comparison, have nothing." The same remark applies to "theosophy," "spiritualism," and other "gospels." It will be time to take them seriously when they utter one wise or true word on God or the soul which is not an echo of something in the old familiar Scriptures.

XXV

FOOLISH BOASTING

"Or did I commit a sin in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I preached to you the Gospel of God for nought? I robbed other Churches, taking wages *of them* that I might minister unto you; and when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man; for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want; and in everything I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself.* As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this glorying in the regions of Achaia. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire an occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

"I say again, Let no man think me foolish; but if *ye do,* yet as foolish receive me, that I also may glory a little. That which I speak, I speak not after the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of glorying. Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. For ye bear with the foolish gladly, being wise *yourselves.* For ye bear with a man, if he bringeth you into bondage, if he devoureth you, if he taketh you *captive,* if he exalteth himself, if he smiteth you on the face. I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak. Yet whereinsoever any is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the

deep; *in* journeyings often, *in* perils of rivers, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils from *my* countrymen, *in* perils from the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; *in* labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the Churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is made to stumble, and I burn not?"—2 Cor. xi. 7-29 (R.V.).

THE connexion of ver. 7 with what precedes is not at once clear. The Apostle has expressed his conviction that he is in nothing inferior to "the superlative apostles" so greatly honoured by the Corinthians. Why, then, is he so differently treated? A rudeness in speech he is willing to concede, but that can hardly be the explanation, considering his fulness of knowledge. Then another idea strikes him, and he puts it, interrogatively, as an alternative. Can it be that he did wrong—humbling himself that they might be exalted—in preaching to them the Gospel of God for nought, *i.e.* in declining to accept support from them while he evangelised in Corinth? Do they appreciate the interlopers more highly than Paul, because they exact a price for their gospel, while he preached his for nothing? This, of course, is bitterly ironical; but it is not gratuitous. The background of fact which prompted the Apostle's question was no doubt this—that his adversaries had misinterpreted his conduct. A true apostle, they said, has a right to be maintained by the Church; the Lord Himself has ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel; but he claims no maintenance, and by that very fact betrays a bad conscience. He dare not make the claim which every true apostle makes without the least misgiving.

It would be hard to imagine anything more malignant in its wickedness than this. Paul's refusal to claim support from those to whom he preached is one of the most purely and characteristically Christian of all his actions. He felt himself, by the grace of Christ, a debtor to all men; he owed them the Gospel; it was as if he were defrauding them if he did not tell them of the love of God in His Son. He felt himself in immense sympathy with the spirit of the Gospel; it was the free gift of God to the world, and as far as it depended on him its absolute freeness would not be obscured by the merest suspicion of a price to be paid. He knew that in foregoing his maintenance he was resigning a right secured to him by Christ (1 Cor. ix. 14), humbling himself, as he puts it here, that others might be spiritually exalted; but he had the joy of preaching the Gospel in the spirit of the Gospel—of entering, in Christ's service, into the self-sacrificing joy of his Lord; and he valued this above all earthly reward. To accuse such a man, on such grounds, of having a bad conscience, and of being afraid to live by his work, because he knew it was not what it pretended to be, was to sound the depths of baseness. It gave Paul in some measure the Master's experience, when the Pharisees said, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." It is really the prince of the devils, the accuser of the brethren, who speaks in all such malignant insinuations; it is the most diabolical thing any one can do—the nearest approach to sinning against the Holy Ghost—when he sets himself to find out bad motives for good actions.

As we shall see further on, Paul's enemies made more specific charges: they hinted that he made his own out of the Corinthians indirectly, and that he

could indemnify himself, for this abstinence, from the collection (chaps. xii. 16-18, chap. viii. and ix.). Perhaps this is why he describes his actual conduct at Corinth in such vigorous language (vv. 7-11), before saying anything at all of his motives. "I preached to you the Gospel of God," he says, "for nothing." He calls it "the Gospel of God" with intentional fulness and solemnity; the genuine Gospel, he means—not another, which is no gospel at all, but a subversion of the truth. He robbed other Churches, and took wages from them, in order to minister to the Corinthians. There is a mingling of ideas in the strong words here used. The English reader thinks of Paul's doing less than justice to other Churches that he might do more than justice to the Corinthians; but though this is true, it is not all. Both "robbed" (ἐσύλησα) and "wages" (ὀψώνιον), as Bengel has pointed out, are military words, and it is difficult to resist the impression that Paul used them as such; he did not come to Corinth to be dependent on any one, but in the course of a triumphant progress, in which he devoted the spoils of his earlier victories for Christ to a new campaign in Achaia.[1] Nay, even when he was with them and was "in want" (what a ray of light that one word ὑστερηθείς lets into his circumstances!), he did not throw himself like a benumbing weight on any one; what his own labours failed to supply, the brethren (perhaps Silas and Timothy) made good when they came from Macedonia. This has been his practice, and will continue to be so. He swears by the truth of Christ that is in him, that no man shall ever stop his mouth, so far as boasting of this independ-

[1] This (observe the aorist λαβών) implies that he brought some money with him from Macedonia to Corinth.

ence is concerned, in the regions of Achaia. Why? His tender heart dismisses the one painful supposition which could possibly arise. "Because I love you not? God knoweth." Love is wounded when its proffered gifts are rejected with scorn, and when *their* rejection means that *it* is rejected; but that was not the situation here. Paul can appeal to Him who knows the heart in proof of the sincerity with which he loves the Corinthians.

His fixed purpose to be indebted to no one in Achaia has another object in view. What that is he explains in the twelfth verse. Strange to say, this verse, like ver. 4, has received two precisely opposite interpretations. (1) Some start with the idea that Paul's adversaries at Corinth were persons who took no support from the Church, and boasted of their disinterestedness in this respect. The "occasion" which they desired was an occasion of any sort for disparaging and discrediting Paul; and they felt they would have such an occasion if Paul accepted support from the Church, and so put himself in a position of inferiority to them. But Paul persists in his self-denying policy, with the object of depriving them of the opportunity they seek, and at the same time of proving them—in this very point of disinterestedness—to be in exactly the same position as himself. But surely, throughout both Epistles, a contrast is implied, in this very point, between Paul and his opponents: the tacit assumption is always that his line of conduct is singular, and is not to be made a rule. And in the face of ver. 20 it is too much to assume that it was the rule of his Judaising opponents in Corinth. (2) Others start with the idea, which seems to me indubitably right, that these opponents did accept support

from the Church. But even on this assumption opinions diverge. (*a*) Some argue that Paul pursued his policy of abstinence partly to deprive them of any opportunity of disparaging him, and partly to compel them to adopt it themselves ("that they may be found even as we").[1] I can hardly imagine this being taken seriously. Why should Paul have wanted to lift these preachers of a false gospel to a level with himself in point of generosity? To coerce them into a reluctant self-denial could be no possible object to him either of wish or hope. Hence there seems only (*b*) the other alternative open, which makes the last clause—"that wherein they boast, they may be found even as we"—depend, not upon "what I do, that I will do," but upon "them that desire occasion."[2] What the adversaries desired was, not occasion to disparage Paul in general, but occasion of being on an equality with him in the matter in which they gloried—viz., their apostolic claims. They felt the advantage which Paul's disinterestedness gave him with the Corinthians; they had not themselves the generosity needed to imitate it; it was not enough to assail it with covert slanders (chap. xii. 16-18), or to say that he was afraid to claim an apostle's due; it would have been all they wanted had he resigned it. Then they could have said that in that in which they boasted—apostolic dignity—they were precisely on a level with him. But not to mention the spiritual motives for his conduct, which have been already explained, and were independent of all relation to his opponents, Paul was too capable a strategist to surrender such a position to the enemy.

[1] That is, the two ἵνα are co-ordinate.

[2] That is, the ἵνα are not co-ordinate, but the second is subordinate to τῶν θελόντων ἀφορμήν.

It would never be by action of his that he and they found themselves on the same ground.

At the very mention of such an equality his heart rises within him. "Found even as we! Why, such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ." Here, at last, the irony is cast aside, and Paul calls a spade a spade. The conception of apostleship in the New Testament is not that dogmatic traditional one, which limits the name to the Twelve, or to the Twelve and the Apostle of the Gentiles; as we see from passages like chap. viii. 23, Acts xiv. 4, 14, it had a much larger application. What Paul means when he calls his opponents false apostles is not that persons *in their position* could have no right to the name; but that persons *with their character*, their aims, and their methods, would only deceive others when they used it. It ought to cover something quite different from what it actually did cover in them. He explains himself further when he calls them "deceitful workers." That they were active he does not deny; but the true end of their activity was not declared. As far as the word itself goes, the "deceit" which they used may have been intended to cloak either their personal or their proselytising views. After what we have read in chap. x. 12-18, the latter seems preferable. The Judaising preachers had shown their hand in Galatia, demanding openly that Paul's converts should be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses as a whole; but their experience there had made them cautious, and when they came to Corinth they proceeded more diplomatically. They tried to sap the Pauline Gospel, partly by preaching "another Jesus," partly by calling in question the legitimacy of Paul's vocation. They said nothing

openly of what was the inevitable and intended issue of all this—the bringing of spiritual Gentile Christendom under the old Jewish yoke. But it is this which goes to the Apostle's soul; he can be nothing but irreconcilably hostile to men who have assumed the guise of apostles of Christ, in order that they may with greater security subvert Christ's characteristic work. Paul dwells on the deceitfulness of their conduct as its most offensive feature; yet he does not wonder at it, for even Satan, he says, fashions himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing, then, if his servants also fashion themselves as servants of righteousness.

We can only tell in a general way what Paul meant when he spoke of Satan, the prince of darkness, transfiguring himself so as to appear a heavenly angel. He may have had some Jewish legend in his mind, some story of a famous temptation, unknown to us, or he may only have intended to represent to the imagination, with the utmost possible vividness, one of the familiar laws in our moral experience, a law which was strikingly illustrated by the conduct of his adversaries at Corinth. Evil, we all know, could never tempt us if we saw it simply as it is; disguise is essential to its power; it appeals to man through ideas and hopes which he cannot but regard as good. So it was in the very first temptation. An act which in its essential character was neither more nor less than one of direct disobedience to God was represented by the tempter, not in that character, but as the means by which man was to obtain possession of a tree good for food (sensual satisfaction), and pleasant to the eyes (æsthetic satisfaction), and desirable to make one wise (intellectual satisfaction). All these satisfactions,

which in themselves are undeniably good, were the cloak under which the tempter hid his true features. He was a murderer from the beginning, and entered Eden to ruin man, but he presented himself as one offering to man a vast enlargement of life and joy. This is the nature of all temptations; to disguise himself, to look as like a good angel as he can, is the first necessity, and therefore the first invention, of the devil. And all who do his work, the Apostle says, naturally imitate his devices. The soul of man is born for good, and will not listen at all to any voice which does not profess at least to speak for good: this is why the devil is a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies. Lying in word and deed is the one weapon with which he can assail the simplicity of man.

But how does this apply to the Judaisers in Corinth? To Paul, we must understand, they were men affecting to serve Christ, but really impelled by personal, or at the utmost by partisan, feelings. Their true object was to win an ascendency for themselves, or for their party, in the Church; but they made their way into it as evangelists and apostles. Nominally, they were ministers of Christ; really, they ministered to their own vanity, and to the bigotry and prejudices of their race. They professed to be furthering the cause of righteousness,[1] but in sober truth the only cause which

[1] There has been some discussion as to the precise force of δικαιοσύνη ("righteousness") in this place. It seems to me most natural to take it, without suspicion, in a perfectly simple sense: a minister of righteousness is the truly good character which these bad men affect. To suppose a covert sneer at their "legalism," or that they had pointed to such matters as are discussed in 1 Cor. v., viii., and x., as indicating the need of a gospel which would pay more attention to righteousness than Paul's, is surely too clever.

was the better for them was that of their own private importance; the result of their ministry was, not that bad men became good, but that they themselves felt entitled to give themselves airs. Over against all this unreality Paul remembers the righteous judgment of God. "Whose end," he concludes abruptly, "shall be according to their works."

The most serious aspect of such a situation as this is seen when we consider that men may fill it unconsciously: they may devote themselves to a cause which looks like the cause of Christ, or the cause of righteousness; and at bottom it may not be Christ or righteousness at all which is the animating principle in their hearts. It is some hidden regard to themselves, or to a party with which they are identified. Even when they labour, and possibly suffer, it is this, and not loyalty to Christ, which sustains them. It may be in defence of orthodoxy, or in furtherance of liberalism, that a man puts himself forward in the Church, and in either case he will figure to those who agree with him as a servant of righteousness; but equally in either case the secret spring of his action may be pride, the desire to assert a superiority, to consolidate a party which is his larger self, to secure an area in which he may rule. He may spend energy and talent on the work; but if this is the ultimate motive of it, it is the work of the devil, and not of God. Even if the doctrine he defends is the true one—even if the policy he maintains is the right one—the services he may accidentally render are far outweighed by the domestication in the Church of a spirit so alien to the Lord's. It is diabolical, not divine; the Gospel is profaned by contact with it; the Church is prostituted when it serves as an arena for its exercise; when it comes forward in the interest

of righteousness, it is Satan fashioning himself into an angel of light.

At this point Paul returns to the idea which has been in his mind since chap. x. 7—the idea of boasting, or rather glorying. He does not like the thing itself, and just as little does he like the mask of a fool, under which he is to play the part : he is conscious that neither suits him. Hence he clears the ground once more, before he commits himself. "Again, I say, let no man think that I *am* foolish ; but if that favour cannot be granted, then even as a foolish person receive me, that I also may boast a little." There is a fine satirical reflection in the "also." If he does make a fool of himself by boasting, he is only doing what the others do, whom the Corinthians receive with open arms. But it strikes his conscience suddenly that there is a higher rule for the conduct of a Christian man than the example of his rivals, or the patience of his friends. The tenderness of Paul's spirit comes out in the next words: "What I speak, I speak *not after the Lord*, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of glorying." The Lord never boasted ; nothing could be conceived less like Him, less after His mind ; and Paul will have it distinctly understood that *His* character is not compromised by any extravagance of which His servant may here make himself guilty. As a rule, the Apostle did speak "after the Lord" ; his habitual consciousness was that of one who had "the mind of Christ," and who felt that Christ's character was, in a sense, in his keeping. That ought to be the rule for all Christians ; we should never find ourselves in situations in which the Christian character, with all its responsibilities, affecting both ourselves and Him, cannot be maintained. With Christ and His interests removed from the scene, Paul at length feels himself

free to measure himself against his rivals. "Since many glory after the flesh, I also will glory." The flesh means everything except the spirit. Where Christ and the Gospel are concerned, it is, according to Paul, an absolute irrelevance, a thing to be simply left out of account; but since they persist in dragging it in, he will meet them on their own ground. What that is, first comes out clearly in ver. 22: but the Apostle delays again to urge his plea for tolerance. "Ye suffer the foolish gladly, being wise yourselves." It answers best to the vehemence of the whole passage to take the first clause here—"Ye suffer the foolish gladly"—as grim earnest, the reference being to the other boasters, Paul's rivals; and only the second clause ironically. Then ver. 20 would give the proof of this: "Ye bear with the foolish gladly . . . for ye bear with a man if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes you captive, if he exalts himself over you, if he strikes you on the face." We must suppose that this strong language describes the overbearing and violent behaviour of the Judaists in Corinth. We do not need to take it literally, but neither may we suppose that Paul spoke at random: he is virtually contrasting his own conduct and that of the people in question, and the nature of the contrast must be on the whole correctly indicated. He himself had been accused of weakness; and he frankly admits that, if comparison has to be made with a line of action like this, the accusation is just. "I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak." This rendering of the Revised Version fairly conveys the meaning. It might be expressed in a paraphrase, as follows: "In saying what I have said of the behaviour of my rivals, I have been speaking to my own disparagement, the idea in-

volved[1] being that *I*" (notice the emphatic ἡμεῖς) "have been weak. Weak, no doubt, I was, if violent action like theirs is the true measure of strength: nevertheless, whereinsoever any is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am bold also. On whatever ground they claim to exercise such extraordinary powers, that ground I can maintain as well as they."

Here, finally, the boasting does begin. "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I." This is the sum and substance of what is meant by their glorying after the flesh: they prided themselves on their birth, and claimed authority on the strength of it. They may have appealed, not only to the election of Israel as the Old Testament represents it, but to words of Jesus, like "Salvation is of the Jews." The three names for what is in reality one thing convey the impression of the immense importance which was assigned to it. "Hebrews" seems the least significant; it is merely the *national* name, with whatever historical glories attached to it in Hebrew minds. "Israelites" is a *sacred* name; it is identified with the prerogatives of the theocratic people: Paul himself, when his heart swells with patriotic emotion, begins the enumeration of the privileges belonging to his kinsmen after the flesh—"they, who are Israelites." "Seed of Abraham," again, is for the Apostle, and probably for these rivals of his, equivalent to "heirs of the promises"; it describes the Jewish people as more directly and immediately interested—nay, as alone directly and immediately interested—in the salvation of God. No one

[1] This is the force of the ὡς: it leaves it open whether the idea has reality answering to it or not.

could read Rom. ix. 4 f. without feeling that pride of race—pride in his people, and in their special relation to God and special place in the history of redemption—was among the strongest passions in the Apostle's heart; and we can understand the indignation and scorn with which he regarded men who tracked him over Asia and Europe, assailed his authority, and sought to undermine his work, on the ground that he was faithless to the lawful prerogatives of Israel. There was not an Israelite in the world prouder of his birth, with a more magnificent sense of his country's glories, than the Apostle of the Gentiles: and it provoked him beyond endurance to see the things in which he gloried debased, as they were debased, by his rivals—made the symbols of a paltry vanity which he despised, made barriers to the universal love of God by which all the families of the earth were to be blessed. Driven to extremity, he could only outlaw such opponents from the Christian community, and transfer the prerogatives of Israel to the Church. "*We*," he taught his Gentile converts to say—"*we are the circumcision*, who worship by the Spirit of God, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, *and have no confidence in the flesh*" (Phil. iii. 3).

Here he does not linger long over what is merely external. It is a deeper question that he asks in ver. 23, "Are they ministers of Christ?" and he feels like a man beside himself, clean out of his senses (παραφρονῶν)—so unsuitable is the subject for boasting—as he answers, "I more." Many interpret this as if it meant, "I am more than a servant of Christ," and then ask wonderingly, "What more?" but surely the natural meaning is, "I am a servant too, in a higher degree." The proof of this is given in that tale of sufferings which bursts irrepressibly from the Apostle's heart,

and sweeps us in its course like a torrent. If he thought of his rivals when he began, and was instituting a serious comparison when he wrote "in labours *more abundantly* [than they]," they must soon have escaped from his mind. It is his own life as a minister of Christ on which he dwells; and after the first words, if a comparison is to be made, he leaves the making of it to others. But comparison, in fact, was out of the question: the sufferings of the Apostle in doing service to Christ were unparalleled and alone. The few lines which he devotes to them are the most vivid light we have on the apostolic age and the apostolic career. They show how fragmentary, or at all events how select, is the narrative in the Book of Acts. Thus of the incidents mentioned in ver. 25 we learn but little from St. Luke. Of the five times nine-and-thirty stripes, he mentions none; of the three beatings with rods, only one; of the three shipwrecks, none (for Acts xxvii. is later), and nothing of the twenty-four hours in the deep. It is not necessary to comment on details, but one cannot resist the impression of triumph with which Paul recounts the "perils" he had faced; so many they were, so various, and so terrible, yet in the Lord's service he has come safely through them all. It is a commentary from his own hand on his own word—"as dying, and, behold, we live!" In the retrospect all these perils show, not only that he is a true servant of Christ, entering into the fellowship of his Master's sufferings to bring blessing to men, but that he is owned by Christ as such: the Lord has delivered him from deaths so great; yes, and will deliver him; and his hope is set on Him for every deliverance he may need (chap. i. 10).

But, after all, these perils are but outward, and the

very enumeration of them shows that they are things of the past. In all their kinds and degrees—violence, privation, exposure, fear—they are a historical testimony to the devotion with which Paul has served Christ. He bore in his body the marks which they had left, and to him they were the marks of Jesus; they identified him as Christ's slave. But not to mention incidental matters,[1] there is another testimony to his ministry which is ever with him—a burden as crushing as these bodily sufferings, and far more constant in its pressure: "that which cometh upon me daily, anxiety for all the Churches." Short of this, anything of which man can boast may be, at least in a qualified sense, "after the flesh"; but in this identification of himself with Christ's cause in the world—this bearing of others' burdens on his spirit—there is that fulfilment of Christ's law which alone and finally legitimates a Christian ministry. Nor was it merely in an official sense that Paul was interested in the affairs of the Church. When the Church is once planted in the world, it has a side which is of the world, a side which may be administered without a very heavy expenditure of Christian feeling: this, it is safe to say, is simply out of sight. Paul's anxiety for the Churches is defined in all its scope and intensity in the passionate words of the twenty-ninth verse: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I burn not?" His love individualised Christian people, and made him one with them. There was no trembling timorous soul, no scrupulous conscience, in all the communities he had founded, whose timidity and weakness did not put a limit to his strength: he condescended

[1] This, which is the second alternative given in the margin of the Revised Version, seems to me the true meaning of *χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτός*.

to their intelligence, feeding them with milk, and not with meat; he measured his liberty, not in principle but in practice, by their bondage; his heart thrilled with their fears; in the fulness of his Christ-like strength he lived a hundred feeble lives. And when spiritual harm came to one of them—when the very least was made to stumble, and was caught in the snare of falsehood or sin—the pain in his heart was like burning fire. The sorrow that pierced the soul of Christ pierced his soul also; the indignation that glowed in the Master's breast, as He pronounced woe on the man by whom occasions of stumbling come, glowed again in him. This is the fire that Christ came to cast on the earth, and that He longed to see kindled—this prompt intense sympathy with all that is of God in men's souls, this readiness to be weak with the weak, this pain and indignation when the selfishness or pride of men leads the weak astray, and imperils the work for which Christ died. And this is indeed the Apostle's last line of defence. Nowhere could boasting be less in place than when a man speaks of the lessons he has learned at the Cross: yet these only give him a title to glory as "a minister of Christ." If glorying *here* is inadmissible, it is because glorying in every sense is "folly."

XXVI

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

"If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes, in order to take me: and through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands.

"I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth), how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. On behalf of such a one will I glory: but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in *my* weaknesses. For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth: but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or heareth from me. And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations—wherefore, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for *My* power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."—2 Cor. xi. 30-xii. 10 (R.V.).

THE difficulties of exposition in this passage are partly connected with its form, partly with its substance: it will be convenient to dispose of the formal

side first. The thirtieth verse of the eleventh chapter—"If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness"—seems to serve two purposes. On the one hand, it is a natural and effective climax to all that precedes; it defines the principle on which Paul has acted in the "glorying" of vv. 23-29. It is not of exploits that he is proud, but of perils and sufferings; not of what he has achieved, but of what he has endured, for Christ's sake; in a word, not of strength, but of weakness. On the other hand, this same thirtieth verse indubitably points forward; it defines the principle on which Paul will always act where boasting is in view; and it is expressly resumed in chap. xii., ver. 5 and ver. 9. For this reason, it seems better to treat it as a text than as a peroration; it is the key to the interpretation of what follows, put into our hands by the Apostle himself. In the full consciousness of its dangers and inconveniences, he means to go a little further in this foolish boasting; but he takes security, as far as possible, against its moral perils, by choosing as the ground of boasting things which in the common judgment of men would only bring him shame.

At this point we are startled by a sudden appeal to God, the solemnity and fulness of which strike us, on a first reading, as almost painfully gratuitous. "The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed for ever, knoweth that I lie not." What is the explanation of this extraordinary earnestness? There is a similar passage in Gal. i. 19—"Now touching the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not"—where Lightfoot says the strength of the Apostle's language is to be explained by the unscrupulous calumnies cast upon him by his enemies. This *may* be the clue to his vehemence here; and in point of

fact it falls in with by far the most ingenious explanation that has been given of the two subjects introduced in this paragraph. The explanation I refer to is that of Heinrici. He supposes that Paul's escape from Damascus, and his visions and revelations, had been turned to account against him by his rivals. They had used the escape to accuse him of ignominious cowardice: the indignity of it is obvious enough. His visions and revelations were as capable of misconstruction: it was easy to call them mere illusions, signs of a disordered brain; it was not too much for malice to hint that his call to apostleship rested on nothing better than one of these ecstatic hallucinations. It is because things so dear to him are attacked—his reputation for personal courage, which is the mainstay of all the virtues; his actual vision of Christ, and divinely authorised mission—that he makes the vehement appeal that startles us at first. He calls God to witness that in regard to both these subjects he is going to tell the exact truth: the truth will be his sufficient defence. Ingenious as it is, I do not think this theory can be maintained. There is no hint in the passage that Paul is defending himself; he is glorying, and glorying in the things that concern his weakness. It seems more probable that, when he dictated the strong words of ver. 31, the outline of all he was going to say was in his mind; and as the main part of it—all about the visions and revelations—was absolutely uncontrollable by any witness but his own, he felt moved to attest it thus in advance. The names and attributes of God fall in well with this. As the visions and revelations were specially connected with Christ, and were counted by the Apostle among the things for which he had the deepest reason to praise God, it is but the reflection of this state of mind when

he appeals to "the God and *Father of the Lord Jesus*, He who is *blessed for evermore*." This is not a random adjuration, but an appeal which takes shape involuntarily in a grateful and pious heart, on which the memory of a signal grace and honour still rests. Of course the verses about Damascus stand rather out of relation to it. But it is a violence which nothing can justify to strike them out of the text on this ground, and along with them part or the whole of ver. 1 in chap. xii.[1] For many reasons unknown to us the danger in Damascus, and the escape from it, may have had a peculiar interest for the Apostle; *hæc persequutio*, says Calvin, *erat quasi primum tirocinium Pauli*; it was his "matriculation in the school of persecution." He may have intended, as Meyer thinks, to make it the beginning of a new catalogue of sufferings for Christ's sake, all of which were to be covered by the appeal to God, and have abruptly repented, and gone off on another subject; but whether or not, to expunge the lines is pure wilfulness. The Apostle glories in what he endured at Damascus—in the imminent peril and in the undignified escape alike—as in things belonging to his weakness. Another might choose to hide such things, but they are precisely what he tells. In Christ's service scorn is glory, ignominy is honour; and it is the mark of loyalty when men rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name.[2]

[1] This is done by a number of critics, including Holsten and Schmiedel.

[2] Godet gives the incident a peculiar turn, more ingenious than convincing. "No doubt the list I have given is one of mere infirmities. I might well boast of things apparently more glorious—as when the whole of that great city, Damascus, was raised against me, and I could only escape secretly."—*Introduction au Nouv. Test.*, p. 393.

When we go on to chap. xii., and the second of the two subjects with which boasting is to be associated, we meet in the first verse with serious textual difficulties. Our Authorised Version gives the rendering: "*It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.*" This follows the Textus Receptus: *Καυχᾶσθαι δὴ οὐ συμφέρει μοι· ἐλεύσομαι γὰρ κ.τ.λ.*, only omitting the *γὰρ* (*for* I will come). The MSS. are almost chaotic, but the most authoritative editors—Tregelles, Tischendorf in his last edition, and Westcott and Hort—agree in reading *Καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ οὐ*[1] *συμφέρον μὲν ἐλεύσομαι δὲ κ.τ.λ.* This is the text which our Revisers render: "*I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.*" Practically, the difference is not so great after all. According to the best authorities, Paul repeats that he is being forced to speak as he does; the consciousness of the disadvantages attendant on this course does not leave him, it is rather deepened, as he approaches the highest and most sacred of all subjects—visions and revelations he has received from Christ. Of these two words, revelations is the wider in import: visions were only one of the ways in which revelations could be made. Paul, of course, is not going to boast directly of the visions and revelations themselves. All through the experiences to which he alludes under this name he was to himself as a third person; he was purely passive; and to claim credit, to glory as if he had done or originated anything, would be transparently absurd. But there are "things of his weakness" associated with, if not dependent on, these high experiences; and

[1] In their margin Westcott and Hort read *δὲ οὐ*.

it is in them, after due explanation, that he purposes to exult.

He begins abruptly. "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven." A man in Christ means a Christian man, a man in his character *as* a Christian. To St. Paul's consciousness the wonderful experience he is about to describe was not natural, still less pathological, but unequivocally religious. It did not befall him as a man simply, still less as an epileptic patient; it was an unmistakably Christian experience. He only existed for himself, during it, as "a man in Christ." "I know such a man," he says, "fourteen years ago caught up even to the third heaven." The date of this "rapture" (the same word is used in Acts viii. 39; 1 Thess. iv. 17; Rev. xii. 5: all significant examples) would be about A.D. 44. This forbids us to connect it in any way with Paul's conversion, which must have been twenty years earlier than this letter; and indeed there is no reason for identifying it with anything else we know of the Apostle. At the date in question, as far as can be made out from the Book of Acts, he must have been in Tarsus or in Antioch. The rapture itself is described as perfectly incomprehensible. He may have been carried up bodily to the heavenly places; his spirit may have been carried up, while his body remained unconscious upon earth: he can express no opinion about this; the truth is only known to God. It is idle to exploit a passage like this in the interest of apostolic psychology; Paul is only taking elaborate pains to tell us that of the mode of his rapture he was absolutely ignorant. It is fairer to infer that the event

was unique in his experience, and that when it happened he was alone; had such things recurred, or had there been spectators, he could not have been in doubt as to whether he was caught up "in the body" or "out of the body." The mere fact that the date is given individualises the event in his life; and it is going beyond the facts altogether to generalise it, and take it as the type of such an experience as accompanied his conversion, or of the visions in Acts xvi. 9, xxii. 17 f., xviii. 9. It was one, solitary, incomparable experience, including in it a complex of visions and revelations granted by Christ: it was this, at all events, to the Apostle; and if we do not believe what he tells us about it, we can have no knowledge of it at all.

"Caught up even to the third heaven." The Jews usually counted seven heavens; sometimes, perhaps because of the dual form of the Hebrew word for heaven, two; but the distinctions between the various heavens were as fanciful as the numbers were arbitrary. It adds nothing, even to the imagination, to speak of an aerial, a sidereal, and a spiritual heaven, and to suppose that these are meant by Paul; we can only think vaguely of the "man in Christ" rising through one celestial region after another till he came even to the third. The word chosen to define the distance (ἕως) suggests that an impression of vast spaces traversed remained on the Apostle's mind; and that the third heaven, on which his sentence pauses, and which is a resting-place for his memory, was also a station, so to speak, in his rapture. This is the only supposition which does justice to the resumption in ver. 3 of the deliberate and circumstantial language of ver. 2. "And I know such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body (I know not) God knoweth

—how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words that it is not lawful for a man to utter." This is a resumption, not a repetition. Paul is not elaborately telling the same story over again, but he is carrying it on, with the same full circumstance, the same grave asseveration, from the point at which he halted. The rapture had a second stage, under the same incomprehensible conditions, and in it the Christian man passed out and up from the third heaven into Paradise. Many of the Jews believed in a Paradise beneath the earth, the abode of the souls of the good while they awaited their perfecting at the Resurrection (cf. Luke xvi. 23 ff., xxiii. 43); but obviously this cannot be the idea here. We must think rather of what the Apocalypse calls "the Paradise of God" (ii. 7), where the tree of life grows, and where those who overcome have their reward. It is an abode of unimaginable blessedness, "far above all heavens," to use the Apostle's own words elsewhere (Eph. iv. 10). What visions he had, or what revelations, during that pause in the third heaven, Paul does not say; and at this supreme point of his rapture, in Paradise, the words he heard were words unspeakable, which it is not lawful for man to utter. Mortal ears might hear, but mortal lips might not repeat, sounds so mysterious and divine: it was not for *man* (*ἀνθρώπῳ* is qualitative) to utter them.

But why, we may ask, if this rapture has its meaning and value solely for the Apostle, should he refer to it here at all? Why should he make such solemn statements about an experience, the historical conditions of which, as he is careful to assure us, are incomprehensible, while its spiritual content is a secret? Is not such an experience literally *nothing* to us? No,

unless Paul himself is nothing; for this experience was evidently a great thing to him. It was the most sacred privilege and honour he had ever known; it was among his strongest sources of inspiration; it had a powerful tendency to generate spiritual pride; and it had its accompaniment, and its counter-weight, in his sharpest trial. The world knows little of its greatest men; perhaps we very rarely know what are the great things in the lives even of the people who are round about us. Paul had kept silence about this sublime experience for fourteen years, and no man had ever guessed it; it had been a secret between the Lord and His disciple; and they only, who were in the secret, could rightly interpret all that depended upon it. There is a kind of profanity in forcing the heart to show itself too far, in compelling a man to speak about, even though he does not divulge, the things that it is not lawful to utter. The Corinthians had put this profane compulsion on the Apostle; but though he yields to it, it is in a way which keeps clear of the profanity. He tells what he dare tell in the third person, and then goes on: "On behalf of such a one will I glory, but on behalf of myself will I not glory, save in my infirmities." *Removere debemus* τὸ *ego a rebus magnis* (Bengel): there are things too great to allow the intrusion of self. Paul does not choose to identify the poor Apostle whom the Corinthians and their misleading teachers used so badly with the man in Christ who had such inconceivable honour put on him by the Lord; if he does boast on behalf of such a one, and magnify his sublime experiences, at all events he does not transfer his prerogatives to *himself*; he does not say, "*I* am that incomparably honoured man; reverence in me a special favourite of Christ." On the

contrary, where *his own* interest has to be forwarded, he will glory in nothing but his weaknesses. The one thing about which he is anxious is that men should not think too highly of him, nor go in their appreciation beyond what their experience of him as a man and a teacher justifies (ver. 6). He might, indeed, boast, reasonably enough; for the truth would suffice, without any foolish exaggeration; but he forbears, for the reason just stated. We are familiar with the danger of thinking too highly of ourselves; it is as real a danger, though probably a less considered one, to be too highly thought of by others. Paul dreaded it; so does every wise man. To be highly thought of, where the character is sincere and unpretentious, may be a protection, and even an inspiration; but to have a reputation, morally, that one does not deserve—to be counted good in respects in which one is really bad—is to have a frightful difficulty added to penitence and amendment. It puts one in a radically false position; it generates and fosters hypocrisy; it explains a vast mass of spiritual ineffectiveness. The man who is insincere enough to be puffed up by it is not far from judgment.

But to return to the text. Paul wishes to be humble; he is content that men should take him as they find him, infirmities and all. He has that about him, too, and not unconnected with these high experiences, the very purpose of which is to keep him humble. If the text is correct,[1] he expresses himself with some embarrassment. "And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations—wherefore, that I should not be

[1] The editors vary greatly in punctuation, especially as they do or do not insert διὸ before the first ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι. Westcott and Hort suspect some primitive error.

exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch." The repetition of the last word shows where the emphasis lies: Paul has a deep and constant sense of the danger of spiritual pride, and he knows that he would fall into it unless a strong counter-pressure were kept up upon him.

I do not feel called on to add another to the number less disquisitions on Paul's thorn in the flesh. The resources of imagination having been exhausted, people are returning to the obvious. The thorn in the flesh [1] was something painful, which affected the Apostle's body; it was something in its nature purely physical, not a solicitation to any kind of sin, such as sensuality or pride, else he would not have ceased to pray for its removal; it was something terribly humbling, if not humiliating—an affection which might well have excited the contempt and loathing of those who beheld it (Gal. iv. 14, which probably refers to this subject); it had begun after, if not in consequence of, the rapture just described, and stood in a spiritual, if not a physical, relation to it; it was, if not chronic or periodic, at least recurrent; the Apostle knew that it would never leave him. What known malady, incident to human nature, fulfils all these conditions, it is not possible with perfect certainty to say. A considerable mass of competent opinion supports the idea that it must have been liability to epileptic seizures.[2] Such an

[1] For the meaning "thorn," not "stake" or "cross," see Ezek. xxviii. 24; Hosea ii. 8 (6); Num. xxxiii. 55.

[2] I should lay no stress here on what some so much insist upon—the use of ἐξεπτύσατε in Gal. iv. 14, and the fact that *morbus despui suetus* is a name for epilepsy: ἐκπτύειν does not mean *despuere*, and after ἐξουθενεῖν it is necessarily metaphorical.

infirmity Paul might have suffered under in common with men so great as Julius Cæsar and the first Napoleon, as Mahomet, King Alfred, and Peter the Great. But it does not quite satisfy the conditions. Epileptic attacks, if they occur with any frequency at all, invariably cause mental deterioration. Now, Paul distinctly suggests that the thorn was a very steady companion; and as his mind, in spite of it, grew year after year in the apprehension of the Christian revelation, so that his last thoughts are always his largest and best, the epileptic hypothesis has its difficulties like every other. Is it likely that a man who suffered pretty constantly from nervous convulsions of this kind wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians after fourteen years of them, or the Epistles to the Romans, Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians later still? There is, of course, no religious interest in affirming or denying any physical explanation of the matter whatever; but with our present data I do not think a certain explanation is within our reach.

The Apostle himself is not interested in it as a physical affection. He speaks of it because of its spiritual significance, and because of the wonderful spiritual experiences he has had in connexion with it. It was given him, he says: but by whom? When we think of the purpose—to save him from spiritual pride—we instinctively answer, "God." And that, it can hardly be doubted, would have been the Apostle's own answer. Yet he does not hesitate to call it in the same breath a messenger of Satan. The name is dictated by the inborn, ineradicable shrinking of the soul from pain; that agonising, humiliating, annihilating thing, we feel at the bottom of our hearts, is not really of

God, even when it does His work. In His perfect world pain shall be no more. It does not need science, but experience, to put these things together, and to understand at once the evil and the good of suffering. Paul, at first, like all men, found the evil overpowering. The pain, the weakness, the degradation of his malady, were intolerable. He could not understand that only a pressure so pitiless and humbling could preserve him from spiritual pride and a spiritual fall. We are all slow to learn anything like this. We think we can take warning, that a word will be enough, that at most the memory of a single pang will suffice to keep us safe. But pains remain with us, and the pressure is continuous and unrelieved, because the need of constraint and of discipline is ceaseless. The crooked branch will not bend in a new curve if it is only tied to it for half an hour. The sinful bias in our natures—to pride, to sensuality, to falsehood, or whatever else—will not be cured by one sharp lesson. The commonest experience in human life is that the man whom sickness and pain have humbled for the moment, the very moment their constraint is lifted, resumes his old habit. He does not think so, but it is really the horn that has been keeping him right; and when its sharpness is blunted, the edge is taken from his conscience too.

Paul besought the Lord, that is Christ, thrice, that this thing might depart from him. The Lord, we may be sure, had full sympathy with that prayer. He Himself had had His agony, and prayed the Father thrice that if it were possible the cup of pain might pass from Him. He prayed, indeed, in express submission to the Father's will; the voice of nature was not allowed in Him to urge an unconditional peremptory

request. Perhaps in Paul on this occasion—certainly often in most men—it is nature, the flesh and not the spirit, which prompts the prayer. But God is all the while guarding the spirit's interest as the higher, and this explains the many real answers to prayer which seem to be refusals. A refusal *is* an answer, if it is so given that God and the soul thenceforth understand one another. It was thus that Paul was answered by Christ: "He hath said to me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for [My] strength is made perfect in weakness."

The first point to notice in this answer is the tense of the verb: "He hath said." The A.V. with "He said" misses the point. The sentence is present as well as past; it is Christ's continuous, as well as final, answer to Paul's prayer. The Apostle has been made to understand that the thorn must remain in his flesh, but along with this he has received the assurance of an abiding love and help from the Lord. We remember, even by contrast, the stern answer made to Moses when he prayed that he might be permitted to cross Jordan and see the goodly land—"Let it suffice thee: speak no more unto Me of this matter." Paul also could no more ask for the removal of the thorn: it was the Lord's will that he should submit to it for high spiritual ends, and to pray against it would now have been a kind of impiety. But it is no longer an unrelieved pain and humiliation; the Apostle is supported under it by that grace of Christ which finds in the need and abjectness of men the opportunity of showing in all perfection its own condescending strength. The collocation of "grace" and "strength" in the ninth verse is characteristic of the New Testament, and very significant. There are many

to whom "grace" is a holy word with no particular meaning; "the grace of God," or "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," is only a vague benignity, which may fairly enough be spoken of as a "smile." But grace, in the New Testament, is force: it is a heavenly strength bestowed on men for timely succour; it finds its opportunity in our extremity; when our weakness makes us incapable of doing anything, it gets full scope *to work*. This is the meaning of the last words—"strength is made perfect in weakness." The truth is quite general; it is an application of it to the case in hand if we translate as in the A.V. (with some MSS.): "*My* strength is made perfect in [thy] weakness." It is enough, the Lord tells Paul, that he has this heavenly strength unceasingly bestowed upon him; the weakness which he has found so hard to bear—that distressing malady which humbled him and took his vigour away—is but the foil to it: it serves to magnify it, and to set it off; with that Paul should be content.

And he is content. That answer to his thrice-repeated prayer works a revolution in his heart; he looks at all that had troubled him—at all that he had deprecated—with new eyes. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities—that is, glory rather than bemoan them or pray for their removal—that the power of Christ may spread its tabernacle over me." This compensation far outweighed the trial. He has ceased to speak now of the visions and revelations, perhaps he has ceased already to think of them; he is conscious only of the weakness and suffering from which he is never to escape, and of the grace of Christ which hovers over him, and out of weakness and suffering makes him strong. His very infirmities redound to the glory of the Lord, and so he chooses

them, rather than his rapture into Paradise, as matter for boasting. "For this cause I am well content, on Christ's behalf,[1] in infirmities, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions and distresses; for when I am weak, then am I strong."

With this noble word Paul concludes his enforced "glorying." He was not happy in it; it was not like him; and it is a triumph of the Spirit of Christ in him that he gives it such a noble turn, and comes out of it so well. There is a tinge of irony in the first passage (chap. xi. 21) in which he speaks of weakness, and fears that in comparison with his high-handed rivals at Corinth he will only have this to boast about; but as he enters into his real experience, and tells us what he had borne for Christ, and what he had learned in pain and prayer about the laws of the spiritual life, all irony passes away; the pure heroic heart opens before us to its depths. The practical lessons of the last paragraphs are as obvious as they are important. That the greatest spiritual experiences are incommunicable; that even the best men are in danger of elation and pride; that the tendency of these sins is immensely strong, and can only be restrained by constant pressure; that pain, though one day to be abolished, is a means of discipline actually used by God; that it may be a plain duty to accept some suffering, or sickness, even a humbling and distressing one, as God's will for our good, and not to pray more for its removal; that God's grace is given to those who so accept His will, as a real reinforcement of their strength, nay, as a substitute, and far more, for the strength which they have

[1] Construe ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ with εὐδοκῶ.

not; that weakness, therefore, and helplessness, as foils to the present help of God, may actually be occasions of glorying to the Christian,—all these, and many more, are gathered up in this passionate Apologia of Paul.

XXVII

NOT YOURS, BUT YOU

"I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works. For what is there wherein ye were made inferior to the rest of the Churches, except *it be* that I myself was not a burden to you? forgive me this wrong.

"Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be a burden to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less? But be it so, I did not myself burden you; but, being crafty, I caught you with guile. Did I take advantage of you by any one of them whom I have sent unto you? I exhorted Titus, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? walked we not by the same Spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps?

"Ye think all this time that we are excusing ourselves unto you. In the sight of God speak we in Christ. But all things, beloved, *are* for your edifying. For I fear, lest by any means, when I come, I should find you not such as I would, and should myself be found of you such as ye would not; lest by any means *there should be* strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; lest, when I come again, my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they committed."—2 Cor. xii. 11-21 (R.V.).

EXPOSITORS differ widely in characterising the three or four brief paragraphs into which this passage may be divided: (1) vv. 11-13; (2) vv. 14, 15, and vv. 16-18; (3) vv. 19-21. What is clear is, that

we feel in it the ground-swell of the storm that has raged through the last two chapters, and that it is not till the beginning of chap. xiii. that the Apostle finally escapes from this, and takes up an authoritative and decisive attitude to the Corinthians. When he does reach Corinth, it will not be to explain and justify his own conduct, either against rivals or those whom rivals have misled, but to take prompt and vigorous action against disorders in the life of the Church.

(1) A review of what he has just written leads to a burst of indignant remonstrance. "I *have* become foolish." The emphasis is on the verb, not on the adjective; it is the painful fact that the eleventh chapter of Second Corinthians is a thing that no wise man would have written if he had been left to himself and his wisdom. Paul, who was a wise man, felt this, and it stung him. He resented the compulsion which was put upon him by the ingratitude and faithlessness of the Corinthians. The situation ought to have been exactly reversed. When he was defamed by strangers, then they, who knew him, instead of hearkening to the calumniators, ought to have stood up in his defence. But they basely left him to defend himself, to plead his own cause, to become a fool by "glorying." This kind of compulsion should never be put upon a good man, especially a man to whom, under God, we ourselves have been deeply indebted. The services he has rendered constitute a claim on our loyalty, and it is a duty of affection to guard his character against disparagement and malice.

Paul, in his deep consciousness of being wronged, presses home the charge against the Corinthians. They had every reason, he tells them, to act as his advocates. When he was among them, he was in

nothing inferior to the "superlative" Apostles—this is his last flout at the Judaist interlopers—nothing though he was. The signs that prove a man to be an apostle were wrought among them (the passive expression keeps *his* agency in the background) in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty deeds. Their suspicions of him, their willingness to listen to insinuations against him, after such an experience, were unpardonable. He can only think of one "sign of the apostle" which was not wrought among them by his means, of one point in which he had made them inferior to the other Churches: he had not burdened them with his support. They were the spoilt children of the apostolic family; and he begs them, with bitter irony, to forgive him this wrong. If they had only been converted by a man who stood upon his rights![1]

"The signs of an apostle" are frequently referred to in Paul's Epistles, and are of various kinds. By far the most important, and the most frequently insisted on, is success in evangelistic work. He who converts men and founds Churches has the supreme and final attestation of apostleship, as Paul conceives it. It is to this he appeals in 1 Cor. ix. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 1-3. In the passage before us Calvin makes "patience" a sign—*primum signum nominat patientiam.* Patience is certainly a characteristic Christian virtue, and it is magni-

[1] Αὐτὸς ἐγώ in ver. 13 has a peculiar emphasis, not easily explained. It cannot mean "*I* did not, though my assistants did," for this is denied in ver. 18. Neither can it mean "*I* did not, though the Judaists did," for whatever is opposed to αὐτὸς ἐγώ must nevertheless be conceived here as belonging to the same category, which the Judaists did not. Possibly it only separates the *person* expressly from his *works*, just recited, and has the same sort of value as in Rom. ix. 3, where it emphasises the person as opposed to the heart and conscience.

ficently exercised in the apostolic life; but it is not peculiarly apostolic. Patience in the passage before us, "every kind of patience," rather brings before our minds the conditions under which Paul did his apostolic work. Discouragements of every description, bad health, suspicion, dislike, contempt, moral apathy and moral licence—the weight of all these pressed upon him heavily, but he bore up under them, and did not suffer them to break his spirit or to arrest his labours. His endurance was a match for them all, and the power of Christ that was in him broke forth in spite of them in apostolic signs. There were conversions, in the first place; but there were also what he calls here "signs [in a narrower sense], and wonders, and mighty deeds." This is an express claim, like that made in Acts xv. 12, Rom. xv. 19, to have wrought what we call miracles. The three words represent miracles under three different aspects: they are "signs" (*σημεῖα*), as addressed to man's intelligence, and conveying a spiritual meaning; they are "wonders" (*τέρατα*), as giving a shock to feeling, and moving nature in those depths which sleep through common experience; and they are "mighty works" or "powers" (*δυνάμεις*), as arguing in him who works them a more than human efficiency. But no doubt the main character they bore in the Apostle's mind was that of *χαρίσματα*, or gifts of grace, which God ministered to the Church by His Spirit. It is natural for an unbeliever to misunderstand even New Testament miracles, because he wishes to conceive them, as it were, *in vacuo*, or in relation to the laws of nature; in the New Testament itself they are conceived in relation to the Holy Ghost. Even Jesus is said in the Gospels to have cast out devils by the Spirit of God; and when Paul wrought "signs and wonders

and powers," it was in carrying out his apostolic work graced by the same Spirit. What things he had done in Corinth we have no means of knowing, but the Corinthians knew; and they knew that these things had no arbitrary or accidental character, but were the tokens of a Christian and an apostle.

(2) In the second paragraph Paul turns abruptly (ἰδού, "behold!") from the past to the future. "This is the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not burden you." The first clause has the same ambiguity in Greek as in English; it is impossible to tell from the words alone whether he had been already twice, or only once, in Corinth. Other considerations decide, I think, that he had been twice; but of course these cannot affect the construction of this verse: for the third time he is in a state of readiness—this is all the words will yield. But when he makes the new visit, whether it be his third or only his second, one thing he has decided: he will act on the same principle as before, and decline to be a burden to them. He does not speak of it boastfully now, as in chap. xi. 10, for his adversaries have passed out of view, but in one of the most movingly tender passages in the whole Bible. "I will not lie on you like a benumbing weight, for I seek not yours, but you." It is not his own interest which brings him to Corinth again, but theirs; it is not avarice which impels him, but love. In a sense, indeed, love makes the greater claim of the two; it is far more to demand the heart than to ask for money. Yet the greater claim is the less selfish, indeed is the purely unselfish one; for it can only be really made by one who gives all that he demands. Paul's own heart was pledged to the Corinthians; and when he said "I seek *you*," he did not mean that he sought

to make a party of them, or a faction, in the interest of his own ambition, but that the one thing he cared for was the good of their souls. Nor in saying so does he claim to be doing anything unusual or extraordinary. It is only what becomes him as their father in Christ (1 Cor. iv. 15). "I seek *you*; for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children." Filial duty, of course, is not denied here; Paul is simply bringing himself as the spiritual father of the Corinthians under the general rule of nature that "love descends rather than ascends." If this seems a hard saying to a child's heart, it is at least true that it descends *before* it ascends. It all begins from God: in a family, it all begins from the parents. The primary duty of love is parental care; and nothing is more unnatural, though at a certain level it is common enough, than the desire of parents to make money out of their children as quickly and as plentifully as possible, without considering the ulterior interests of the children themselves. This kind of selfishness is very transparent, and is very naturally avenged by ingratitude, and the Apostle for his part renounces it. "*I*," he exclaims, with all the emphasis in his power—"*I* have more than a natural father's love for you. I will with all gladness spend, yes, and be spent to the uttermost, for your souls! I will give what I have, yes, and all that I am, that you may be profited." And then he checks that rush of affection, and dams up the overflowing passion of his heart in the abrupt poignant question: "If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?"[1]

[1] This is the reading of our Revisers, and of Westcott and Hort's text. In their margin they read: "I will very gladly spend, etc., if loving you [ἀγαπῶν instead of ἀγαπῶ] more abundantly I am loved

This is not the first passage in the Epistle, nor, near as we are to the end, is it the last, in which Paul shows us the true spirit of the Christian pastor. "Not yours, but you," is the motto of every minister who has learned of Christ; and the noble words of ver. 15, "I will very gladly spend and be spent to the last for your souls," recall more nearly than any other words in Scripture the law by which our Lord Himself lived—not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give life a ransom for many. Here, surely, is a sign of apostleship—an unmistakable mark of the man who is specially called to continue Christ's work. That work cannot be done at all except in the spirit of Him who inaugurated it, and though love like Paul's, and love like Christ's, may be mocked and trampled on, it is the only power which has the right to speak in Christ's name. The joy of sacrifice thrills through the Apostle's words, and it is joy in the Holy Ghost; it is a fellowship with Christ in the very life of His life that lifts Paul, for the moment, to the heavenly places. This is the spirit in which wrong is to be met, and suspicion, calumny, and contempt; it is in this, if at all, that we can be more than conquerors. Nature says, "Stand upon your rights; vindicate your position; insist on having all that you conceive to be your due"; but love

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the less." This reading and punctuation are adopted by a number of scholars, but explained in two ways:—(1) As in the Authorised Version, "*though* the more abundantly," etc. But εἰ ("if"), which is the true reading (not εἰ καί), cannot be translated "though." (2) By others it is rendered, "I will very gladly spend, etc., if the more abundantly I love you the less I am loved": that is, "if things have come to such a pass between us that the natural relations are utterly inverted, I will make any sacrifice to restore them to a better footing." This is insipid and flat to the last degree: textual and psychological considerations combine to support the Revisers' text.

says, "Spend and be spent, and spare not till all is gone; life itself is not too much to give that love may triumph over wrong."

It is not possible to write long as Paul writes in these two verses (14 and 15). The tension is too great both for him and for his readers. With ἔστω δέ—"But be it so"—he descends from this height. He writes in the first person, but he is plainly repeating what he assumes others will say. "Very well, then, let that pass," is the answer of his enemies to his friends when that passionate protestation is read. "He did not *himself* prove burdensome to us, but being crafty he brought us into his net by guile. He exploited the Church in his own interest by means of his agents." This charge the Apostle meets with a downright denial; he can appeal to the knowledge which the Corinthians themselves possess of the manner in which his agents have conducted themselves. He had no doubt had occasion, far oftener than we know, to communicate with so important and so restless a Church; and he challenges the Corinthians to say that a single one of those whom he had sent had taken advantage of them. He instances—perhaps as the last of his deputies, who had but just returned from Corinth when he wrote this letter; perhaps as the one on whom scandal had chosen to fasten—his "partner" and "fellow-labourer toward them," Titus; and he refers to an unknown brother who had accompanied him. They cannot mean to say (μήτι) that Titus took advantage of them? "Walked we not in the same Spirit?" A modern reader naturally makes "spirit" subjective, and takes it as equivalent to "the same moral temper or principle"; an early Christian reader would more probably think of the Holy Spirit as that which

ruled in Paul and Titus alike. In any case the same Spirit led to the same conduct; they walked in the same self-denying path, and scrupulously abstained from burdening the Corinthians for their support.

(3) We feel the meanness of all this, and are glad when the Apostle finally turns his back on it. It is an indignity to be compelled even to allude to such things. And the worst is, that no care a man can take will prevent people from misunderstanding his indignant protest, and from assuming that he is really on his trial before them, and not improbably compromised. Paul's mind is made up to leave the Corinthians no excuse for such misunderstanding and presumption. In ver. 19 he reads their ignoble thought: "Ye have long[1] been thinking"—*i.e.*, all through the last two chapters, and, indeed, more or less all through the Epistle; see chap. iii. 1—"that we are making our defence at your bar. Far from it: at God's bar we speak in Christ." He will not endure, with his visit to Corinth close at hand, that there should be any misapprehension as to their relations. His responsibility as a Christian man is not to them, but to God; He is the Master to whom he stands or falls; it is He alone to whom he has to vindicate his life. The Corinthians had been seating themselves in imagination on the tribunal, and they are summarily set on the floor. But Paul does not wish to be rude or unkind. "You are not my judges, certainly," he seems to say, "but all I have said and done, beloved, all I say and do, is for your building up in Christian life. My heart is with you in it all, and I sincerely intend your good."

[1] Πάλαι is the true reading, not πάλιν. Westcott and Hort retain the interrogation.

We cannot sufficiently admire the combination in the Apostle, or rather the swift alternation, of all those intellectual and emotional qualities that balance each other in a strong living character. He can be at once trenchant and tender; inexorable in the maintenance of a principle, and infinitely sympathetic and considerate in his treatment of persons. We see all his qualities illustrated here.

Their edification is the governing thought on which the last verses of the chapter turn, and on which eventually the whole Epistle rests (see chap. xiii. 10). It is because he is interested in their edification that he thinks with misgiving of the journey in prospect. "I fear lest by any means when I come I find you not such as I would, and on my part be found of you not such as ye would." What these two fears imply is unfolded in due order in the remainder of the letter. The Corinthians, such as Paul would not have them, are depicted in vv. 20 and 21; Paul, in a character in which the Corinthians would prefer not to see him, comes forward in chap. xiii., vv. 1-10. It is with the first only of these two fears, the bad condition of the Corinthian Church, that we are here concerned. This first fear has two grounds. The first is the prevalence of sins which may perhaps be summarised as sins of self-will. Strife, jealousy, passions, factions and low factious arts, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: such is the catalogue. It illustrates what has been well described as "the carnality of religious contention." Almost all the sins here enumerated are directly connected with the existence of parties and party feeling in the Church. They are of a kind which has disgraced the Church all through its history, and the exceeding sinfulness of which is not yet recog-

nised by the great mass of professing Christians. People do not consider that the Church, as a visible society, more or less naturalised in the world, is as capable as any other society of offering a career to ambition, or of furnishing a theatre for the talents and the energies of self-seeking men; and they have a vague idea that the wilfulness, the intriguing and factious arts, the jealousy and conceit of men, are better things when put to the service of the Church than when employed in mere selfishness. But they are not. They are the very same, and they are peculiarly odious when enlisted in His service who was meek and lowly in heart, and who gave Himself for men. Paul's first list of sins is only too life-like, and the fear grounded on it is one which many a modern minister can share. The second list is made up of what might be called, in contrast with sins of self-will, sins of self-indulgence—"uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness that they wrought." Both together make up what the Apostle calls the works of the flesh. Both together are the direct opposite of those fruits of the spirit in which the true life of the Church consists. Paul writes as if he were more alarmed about the sins of the latter class. He puts μὴ ("lest") instead of μήπως ("lest by any means": ver. 20), marking thus the climax, and something like the certainty,[1] of his sad apprehension. "I fear," he says, "lest when I come again my God should humble me before you"—or, perhaps "in connexion with you." Nothing could more bow down a true and loving heart like Paul's than to

[1] This is also suggested by the reading ταπεινώσει, which Tischendorf adopts in ver. 21, with B, D, E, F, etc. ℵ, A, K, followed by Westcott and Hort, have ταπεινώσῃ.

see a Church that he had regarded as the seal of his apostleship—a congregation of men "washed, sanctified, and justified"—wallowing again in the mire of sensual sins. He had been proud of them, had boasted of them, had given thanks to God on their behalf: how it must have crushed him to think that his labour on them had come to this! Yet he writes instinctively "my God." This humiliation does not come to him without his Father; there is a divine dispensation in it, as far as he is concerned, and he submits to it as such. He dare not think of it as a personal insult; he dare not think of the sinners as if they had offended against *him*. He fears he will have to *mourn over* numbers of those who have before sinned, and who will not have repented[1] of these sensualities before he reaches Corinth. In chap. v. 2 of the First Epistle he sums up his condemnation of the moral laxity of the Church in the presence of such evils in the words: *Ye did not mourn*. He himself will not be able to avoid mourning: his heart grows heavy within him as he thinks of what he must see before long. This, again, is the spirit of the true pastor. Selfish anger has nothing healing in it, nor has wounded pride; it is not for any man, however good or devoted, to feel that he is entitled to resent it, as a personal wrong, when men fall into sin. He is not entitled to resent it, no matter how much he may have spent, or how freely he may have spent himself, upon them; but he is bound to bewail it. He is bound to recognise in it, so far as he himself is free from responsibility, a dispensation of God intended to make him humble; and in all humility and love he is bound

[1] It is more natural to construe ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ κ.τ.λ. with μετανοησάντων than with πενθήσω.

to plead with the lapsed, not his own cause, but God's. This is the spirit in which Paul confronts the sad duties awaiting him at Corinth, and in this again we see "the signs of the apostle."

The two catalogues of sins with which this chapter closes remind us, by way of contrast, of the two characteristic graces of Christianity: self-will or party spirit, in all its forms, is opposed to brotherly love, and self-indulgence, in all its forms, to personal purity. There is much in this Epistle which would be called by some people theological and transcendent; but no one knew better than Paul that, though Christianity must be capable of an intellectual construction, it is not an intellectual system in essence, but a new moral life. He was deeply concerned, as we have repeatedly seen, that the Corinthians should think right thoughts about Christ and the Gospel; but he was more than concerned, he was filled with grief, fear, and shame, when he thought of the vices of temper and of sensuality that prevailed among them. These went to the root of Christianity, and if they could not be destroyed it must perish. Let us turn our eyes from them to the purity and love that they obscure, and lift up our hearts to these as the best things to which God has called us in the fellowship of His Son.

XXVIII

CONCLUSION

"This is the third time I am coming to you. At the mouth of two witnesses or three shall every word be established. I have said beforehand, and I do say beforehand, as when I was present the second time, so now, being absent, to them that have sinned heretofore, and to all the rest, that, if I come again, I will not spare; seeing that ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me; who to you-ward is not weak, but is powerful in you: for He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth through the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him through the power of God toward you. Try your own selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate. But I hope that ye shall know that we are not reprobate. Now we pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we may appear approved, but that ye may do that which is honourable, though we be as reprobate. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we rejoice, when we are weak, and ye are strong: this we also pray for, even your perfecting. For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down.

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.

"All the saints salute you.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."—2 Cor. xiii. (R.V.).

THE first part of this chapter is in close connexion with what precedes; it is, so to speak, the explanation of St. Paul's fear (xii. 20) that when he

came to Corinth he would be found of the Corinthians "not such as they would." He expresses himself with great severity; and the abruptness of the first three sentences, which are not linked to each other by any conjunctions, contributes to the general sense of rigour. "This is the third time I am coming to you" is a resumption of chap. xii. 14, "This is the third time I am ready to come to you," and labours under the same ambiguity; it is perhaps more natural to suppose that Paul had actually been twice in Corinth (and there are independent reasons for this opinion), but the words here used are quite consistent with the idea that this was the third time he had definitely purposed and tried to visit them, whether his purpose had been carried out or not. When he arrives, he will proceed at once to hold a judicial investigation into the condition of the Church, and will carry it through with legal stringency. "At the mouth of two and (where available) three witnesses shall every question be brought to decision." This principle of the Jewish law (Deut. xix. 15), to which reference is made in other New Testament passages connected with Church discipline (Matt. xviii. 16; 1 Tim. v. 19), is announced as that on which he will act. There will be no informality and no injustice, but neither will there be any more forbearance. All cases requiring disciplinary treatment will be brought to an issue at once, and the decision will be given rigorously as the matter of fact, attested by evidence, requires.[1] He feels justified in proceeding

[1] Although it is supported by commentators like Chrysostom and Calvin, it is difficult to treat otherwise than as a whim the idea that Paul's two or three visits to Corinth make *him* equal to the two or three witnesses required by the law. So also Godet, who counts the

thus after the reiterated warnings he has given them. To these reference is made in the solemn words of ver. 2. English readers can see, by comparing the Revised Version with the Authorised, the difficulties of translation which still divide scholars. The words which the Authorised Version renders "*as if I were* present" (ὡς παρών) are rendered by the Revisers "*as when I was* present." All scholars connect this ambiguous clause with τὸ δεύτερον: "the second time." Hence there are two main ways in which the whole passage can be rendered. The one is that which stands in the Revised Version, and which is defended by scholars like Meyer, Lightfoot,[1] and Schmiedel: it is in effect this—"I have already forewarned, and do now forewarn, as I did on the occasion of my second visit, so also now in my absence, those who have sinned heretofore, and all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare." This is certainly rather cumbrous; but assuming that chap. ii. 1 gives strong ground for believing in a second visit already paid to Corinth—a visit in which Paul had been grieved and humbled by disorders in the Church, but had not been in a position to do more than warn against their continuance—it seems the only available interpretation. Those who evade the force of chap. ii. 1 render here in the line of the Authorised Version: "I have forewarned [viz., in the first letter, *e.g.* iv. 21], and do now forewarn, as though I were present the second time, although I am now absent, those who have sinned," etc. So Heinrici. This, on grammatical grounds, seems quite

three thus: (1) a warning by word of mouth during his second visit; (2) this letter; (3) his actual arrival for the third time.

[1] See *Biblical Essays*, p. 274.

legitimate; but the contrast between presence and absence, which is real and effective in the other rendering, is here quite inept. We can understand a man saying, "I tell you in my absence, just as I did when I was with you that second time": but who would ever say, "I tell you as if I were present with you a second time, although in point of fact I am absent"? The absence here comes in with a grotesque effect, and there seems hardly room to doubt that the rendering in our Revised Version is correct. Paul had, when he visited Corinth a second time, warned those who had sinned before that visit; he now warns them again, and all others with them who anticipated his coming with an evil conscience, that the hour of decision is at hand. It is not easy to say what he means by the threat not to spare. Many point to judgments like that on Ananias and Sapphira, or on Elymas the sorcerer; others to the delivering of the incestuous person to Satan, "for the destruction of the flesh"; the supposition being that Paul came to Corinth armed with a supernatural power of inflicting physical sufferings on the disobedient. This uncanny idea has really no support in the New Testament, in spite of the passages quoted; and probably what his words aim at is an exercise of spiritual authority which might go so far as totally to exclude an offender from the Christian community.

The third verse is to be taken closely with the second: "I will not spare, since ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me, who to you-ward is not weak, but is powerful in you." The friction between the Corinthians and the Apostle involved a higher interest than his. In putting Paul to the proof, they were really putting to the proof the Christ who spoke in him. In

challenging Paul to come and exert his authority, in defying him to come with a rod, in presuming on what they called his weakness, they were really challenging Christ. The description of Christ in the last clause—"who towards you is not weak, but is powerful in you, or among you"—must be interpreted by the context. It can hardly mean that in their conversion, and in their experience as Christian people, they had evidence that Christ was not weak, but strong: such a reference, though supported by Calvin, is surely beside the mark. The meaning must rather be that for the purpose in hand—the restoration of order and discipline in the Corinthian Church—the Christ who spoke in Paul was not weak, but mighty. Certainly any one who looked at Christ in Himself might see proofs, in abundance, of weakness; going directly to the crowning one, "He was *crucified*," the Apostle says, "*in virtue of weakness.*" Sin was so much stronger than He, in the days of His flesh, that it did what it liked with Him. Sin mocked Him, buffeted Him, scourged Him, spit upon Him nailed Him to the tree—so utter was His weakness, so complete the triumph of sin over Him. But that is not the whole story: "He liveth in virtue of the power of God." He has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; sin cannot touch Him any more: He has all power in heaven and on earth, and all things are under His feet. This double relation of Christ to sin is exemplified in His Apostle. "For we also are weak in Him; but we shall live with Him, in virtue of God's power, toward you." The sin of the Corinthians had had its victory over Paul on the occasion of his second visit; God had humbled him then, even as Christ was humbled on the cross; he had seen the evil, but it had been too strong for him; in spite of

his warnings, it had rolled over his head. That "weakness," as the Corinthians called it, remained; to them he was still as weak as ever—hence the present ἀσθενοῦμεν: but to the Apostle it was no discreditable thing; it was a weakness "in Christ," or perhaps, as some authorities read, "with Christ." In being overpowered by sin for the moment, he entered into the fellowship of his Lord's sufferings; he drank out of the cup his Master drank upon the cross. But the cross does not represent Christ's whole attitude to sin, nor does that incapacity to deal with the turbulence, disloyalty, and immorality of the Corinthians represent the whole attitude of the Apostle to these disorders. Paul is not only crucified with Christ, he has been made to sit with Him in the heavenly places; and when he comes to Corinth this time, it will not be in the weakness of Christ, but in the victorious strength of His new life. He will come clothed with power from on high to execute the Lord's sentence on the disobedient.

This passage has great practical interest. There are many whose whole conception of the Christian attitude toward evil is summed up in the words: "He was crucified through weakness." They seem to think that the whole function of love in presence of evil, its whole experience, its whole method and all its resources, are comprehended in bearing what evil chooses, or is able, to inflict. There are even bad people, like the Corinthians, who imagine that this exhausts the Christian ideal, and that they are wronged if they are not allowed by Christians to do what they like to them with impunity. And if it is not so easy to act on this principle in our dealings with one another—though there are people mean enough to try it—there are plenty of

hypocrites who presume on it in their dealings with God. "He was crucified through weakness," they say in their hearts; the cross exhausts His relation to sin; that infinite patience can never pass over to severity. But the assumption is false: the cross does *not* exhaust Christ's relation to sin; He passed from the cross to the throne, and when He comes again it is as Judge. It is the sin of sins to presume upon the cross; it is a mistake that cannot be remedied to persist in that presumption to the end. When Christ comes again, *He* will not spare. The two things go together in Him: the infinite patience of the cross, the inexorable righteousness of the throne. The same two things go together in men: the depth with which they feel evil, the completeness with which they suffer it to work its will against them, and the power with which they vindicate the good. It is the worst blindness, as well as the basest guilt, which, because it has seen the one, refuses to believe in the other.

The Corinthians, by their rebellious spirit, were putting Paul to the proof; in ver. 5 he reminds them sharply that it is their own standing as Christians which is in question, and not his. "Try *yourselves*," he says, with abrupt emphasis, "*not me*; try *yourselves*, if ye are in the faith; put *yourselves* to the proof; or know ye not as to *your own selves*, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, ye be reprobate." The meaning here is hardly open to doubt:[1] the Apostle urges his

[1] Another interpretation is worth mentioning. "Try *yourselves*, I say; put *yourselves* to the proof; *do not leave it for me to do* when I come. Why, do you not recognise as to your own selves that Jesus Christ is among you, so that you have spiritual competence to proceed in correcting the disorders of the Church?—unless, indeed, ye are reprobates: which is an impossible supposition."

readers individually to examine their Christian standing. "Let each," he virtually says, "put himself to the proof, and see whether he is in the faith." There is, indeed, a difficulty in the clause, "Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, ye be reprobate." This may be read either as a test, put into their hands to direct them in their self-scrutiny; or as an appeal to them after—or even before—the scrutiny has been made. The manner in which the alternative is introduced—"unless, indeed, ye are reprobates"—a manner plainly suggesting that the alternative in question is *not* to be assumed, is in favour of taking it in the sense of an appeal. After all, they are a Christian Church with Christ among them, and they cannot but know it. Paul, again, on his side cannot think that they are reprobate, and he hopes they will recognise that *he* is not, but on the contrary a genuine Apostle, attested by God, and to be acknowledged and obeyed by the Church. Very often that temper which judges others, and calls legitimate spiritual authority in question, is due, as in part it was among the Corinthians, to inward misgivings. It is when people ought to be putting themselves to the proof, and are with cause afraid to begin, that they are most ready to challenge others. It was a kind of self-defence—the self-defence of a bad conscience—when the Corinthians required Paul to demonstrate his apostolic claims before he meddled with their affairs. It was a plea, the sole purpose of which was to enable them to live on as they were, immoral and impenitent. It is properly retorted when he says, "Try *yourselves* if ye are in the faith; it

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But ἑαυτούς certainly suggests that in the implied contrast Paul is *object*, not *subject*.

is in every sense of the word an impertinence to drag in anybody else."

In both cases Paul hopes the result of the trial will be satisfactory. He would not like to think the Corinthians ἀδόκιμοι ("reprobate"), and no more would he like them to regard him in that light. Still, the two things are not on exactly the same footing in his mind; *their* character is much dearer to him than his own reputation; provided they are what they ought to be, he does not care what is thought of himself. This is the general sense of vv. 7 to 9, and except in ver. 8 the details are clear enough. He prays to God that the Corinthians may do no evil. His object in this is not that he himself may appear approved; indeed, if his prayer is granted, he will have no opportunity of exercising the disciplinary authority of which he has said so much. It will be open to any one then to say that he *is* ἀδόκιμος, reprobate, a person to be rejected because he has not demonstrated his claim to apostolic authority by apostolic action. But as long as they act well, which is the real object of his prayer, he does not care, though he *has* to pass as ἀδόκιμος. He can bear evil report as well as good report, and rejoice to fulfil his vocation under the one condition as well as the other. This is only one aspect of that sacrifice of self to the interest of the flock which is indispensable in the good shepherd. As compared with any single member of his congregation, a minister may be more in the eye of the world, more still in the eye of the Church; and it is natural for him to think that some self-assertion, some recognition and reputation, are due to his position. It is a mistake: no man who understands the position at all will dream of asserting his own importance against that of the community. The

Church, the congregation even, no matter how much it may be indebted to him, no matter if it owes to him, as the Corinthian Church to Paul, its very existence in Christ, is always greater than he; it will outlive him; and, however tender he may naturally be of his own position and reputation, if the Church prosper in Christian character, he must be as willing to let these dear possessions go, and to count them worthless, as to part with money or any material thing.

The real difficulty here lies in the eighth verse, where the Apostle explains, apparently, why he acts on the principle just stated. "I pray this prayer for you," he seems to say, "and I am content to pass as a reprobate, while you do that which is honourable; for I can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." What is the connexion of ideas alluded to by this "for"? Some of the commentators give up the question in despair; others only remind one of the French pastor who said to some one who preached on Romans: "Saint Paul est déjà fort difficile et . . . vous veniez après." As far as one can make out, he seems to say: "I act on this principle because it is the one which furthers the truth, and therefore is obligatory upon me; I am not able to act on one which would injure or prejudice the truth." The truth, in this interpretation, would be synonymous, as it often is in the New Testament, with the Gospel. Paul is incapable of acting in a way that would check the Gospel, and its influence over men; he has no choice but to act in its interest; and therefore he is content to let the Corinthians think what they please of him, provided his prayer is answered, and they do no evil, but rather that which is good before God. For this is what the Gospel requires. "Content," indeed, is not a strong enough

word. "We *rejoice*," he says in ver. 9, "when we are weak, and you are strong: this we also pray for, even your perfecting." "Perfecting" is perhaps as good a word as can be got for *κατάρτισις*: it denotes the putting right of all that is defective or amiss.

It is in favour of this interpretation of the eighth verse that the reason seems at first out of proportion to the conclusion. With an idealist like Paul it is always so. He appeals to the loftiest motives to influence the lowliest actions,—to faith in the Incarnation, as a motive to generosity—to faith in the Resurrection Life, as a motive to patient continuance in well-doing—to faith in the heavenly citizenship of believers, as a motive to separation from the licentious. In the same way he appeals here to a universal moral rule to explain his conduct in a particular case. His principle everywhere is, not to act in prejudice of (*κατά*) the Gospel, but in furtherance of it (*ὑπέρ*); he has strength available for this last purpose, but none at all for the former. It is the rule on which every minister of Christ should always act; and if the line of conduct which it pointed out sometimes led men to disregard their own reputation, provided the Gospel was having free course, the very strangeness of such a result might turn to the furtherance of the truth. It is by-ends that explain nine-tenths of spiritual inefficiency; singleness of mind like this would save us our perplexities and our failures alike.

It is because he has an interest like this in the Corinthians that Paul writes as he has done while absent from Corinth. He does not wish, when he comes among them, to proceed with severity. The power the Lord gave him would entitle him to do so; yet he remembers

that this power was given him, as he has remarked already (x. 8), for building up, and not for casting down. Even casting down with a view to building up on a better basis was a less natural, if sometimes a necessary, exercise of it; and he hopes that the severity of his words will lead, even before his coming, to such voluntary action on the part of the Church as will spare him severity in deed.

This is practically the end of the letter, and the mind involuntarily goes back to the beginning. We see now the three great divisions of it plainly before our eyes. In *the first seven chapters* Paul writes under the general impression of the good news Titus has brought from Corinth. It has made him glad, and he writes gladly. The one case that he had been concerned about has been disposed of in a way that he can consider satisfactory; the Church, in the majority of its members, has acted well in the matter. *The eighth and ninth chapters* are a digression: they are concerned solely with the collection for the poor at Jerusalem, and Paul inserts them where they stand perhaps because the transition was easy from his joy over the change at Corinth to his joy over the liberality of the Macedonians. In *chaps. x.* 1-*xiii.* 10 he evidently writes in a very different strain. The Church, as a whole, has returned to its allegiance, especially on the moral question at issue; but there are Jewish interlopers in it, subverting the Gospel, and reconverting Paul's converts to their own illiberal faith; and there are also, as it would appear, numbers of sensual people who have not yet renounced the vilest sins. It is these two sets of persons who are in view in the last four chapters; and it is the utter inconsistency of Judaic nationalism on the one hand, and Corinthian licence on the other, with the

spiritual Gospel of the Son of God, that explains the severity of his tone. "The truth" is at stake—the truth for which he has suffered all that he recounts in chap. xi.—and no vehemence is too passionate for the occasion. Yet love controls it all, and he speaks severely that he may not have to act severely; he writes these things that, if possible, he may be spared the pain of saying them.

And then the letter, like almost every letter, hastens in disconnected sentences to its close. "Finally, brethren, farewell." He cannot but address them affectionately at parting; when the heart recovers from the heat of indignation, its unchanging love speaks again as before. Some would render χαίρετε "rejoice," instead of "farewell"; to Paul's readers, no doubt, it had a friendly sound, but "rejoice" is far too strong. In all the imperatives that follow there is a reminiscence of their faults as well as a desire for their good: "be perfected, be comforted, be of the same mind, live in peace." There was much among them to rectify, much that was inevitably disheartening to overcome, much dissension to compose, much friction to allay; but as he prays them to face these duties he can assure them that the God of love and peace will be with them. God can be characterised by love and peace; they are His essential attributes, and He is an inexhaustible source of them, so that all who make peace and love their aim can count confidently to be helped by Him. It is, as it were, the first step of obedience to these precepts—the first condition of obtaining the presence of God which has just been promised—when the Apostle writes, "Greet one another with a holy kiss." The kiss was the symbol of Christian brotherhood; in exchanging it Christians recognised each other as

members of one family. To do this even in form, to do it with solemnity in a public assembly of the whole Church, was to commit themselves to the obligations of peace and love which had been so set at naught in their religious contentions. It is a generous encouragement to them to recognise each other as children of God when he adds that all the Christians about him recognise them in that character. "All the saints salute you." They do so because they are Christians and because you are; acknowledge each other, as you are all acknowledged from without.

The letter is closed, like all that the Apostle wrote, with a brief prayer. "The grace of the Lord Jesus [Christ], and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." Of all such prayers it is the fullest in expression, and this has gained for it pre-eminently the name of the apostolic benediction. It would be too much to say that the doctrine of the Trinity, as it has been defined in the creeds, is explicitly to be found here; there is no statement at all in this place of the relations of Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit. Still, it is on passages like this that the Trinitarian doctrine of God is based; or rather it is in passages like this that we see it beginning to take shape: it is based on the historical fact of the revelation of God in Christ, and on the experience of the new divine life which the Church possesses through the Spirit. It is extraordinary to find men with the New Testament in their hands giving explanations, speculative or popular, of this doctrine, which stand in no relation either to the historical Christ or to the experience of the Church. But these things hang together; and whatever the worth may be of a Trinitarian doctrine which is not essentially dependent on the Person of Christ and on

the life of His Church, it is certainly not Christian. The historical original of the doctrine, and the impulse of experience under which Paul wrote, are suggested even by the order of the words. A speculative theologian may try to deduce the Triune nature of God from the borrowed assumption that God is love, or knowledge, or spirit; but the Apostle has only come to know God as love through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this which reveals God's love and assures us of it; it is this by which God commends His own love to us. "No man cometh unto *the Father* but by *Me*," Jesus said; and this truth, pre-announced by the Lord, is certified here by the very order in which the Apostle instinctively puts the sacred names. "The communion of the Holy Spirit" stands last; it is in this that "the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God" become the realised possessions of Christian men. The precise force of "the communion" is open to doubt. If we take the genitive in the same sense as it bears in the previous clauses, the word will mean "the fellowship or unity of feeling which is produced by the Spirit." This is a good sense, but not the only one: what Paul wishes may rather be the joint participation of them all *in* the Spirit, and in the gifts which it confers. But practically the two meanings coincide, and our minds rest on the comprehensiveness of the blessing invoked on a Church so mixed, and in many of its members so unworthy. Surely "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost" were with the man who rises so easily, so unconstrainedly, after all the tempest and passion of this letter, to such a height of love and peace. Heaven is open over his head; he is conscious, as he writes, of the immensities of that love whose breadth and length

and depth and height pass knowledge. In the Son who revealed it—in God who is its eternal source—in the Spirit through whom it lives in men—he is conscious of that love and of its workings; and he prays that in all its aspects, and in all its virtues, it may be with them all.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

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NEW YORK
FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
LAFAYETTE PLACE
1900

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THE PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER i. 1—10.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADDRESS.

"Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren which are with me, unto the Churches of Galatia." * —GAL. i. 1, 2.

ANTIQUITY has nothing to show more notable in its kind, or more precious, than this letter of Paul to the Churches of Galatia. It takes us back, in some respects nearer than any other document we possess, to the beginnings of Christian theology and the Christian Church. In it the spiritual consciousness of Christianity first reveals itself in its distinctive character and its full strength, free from the trammels of the past, realizing the advent of the new kingdom of God that was founded in the death of Christ. It is the voice of the Church testifying "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts." Buried for a thousand years under the weight of the Catholic legalism, the teaching of this Epistle came to life again in the rise of Protestantism. Martin Luther put it to his lips as a trumpet to blow the reveillé of the Reformation. His famous Commentary summoned enslaved Christendom to recover "the liberty wherewith

* The text used in this exposition is, with very few exceptions, that of the Revised English Version, or its margin.

Christ hath made us free." Of all the great Reformer's writings this was the widest in its influence and the dearest to himself. For the spirit of Paul lived again in Luther, as in no other since the Apostle's day. The Epistle to the Galatians is the charter of Evangelical faith.

The historical criticism of the present century has brought this writing once more to the front of the conflict of faith. Born in controversy, it seems inevitably to be born for controversy. Its interpretation forms the pivot of the most thoroughgoing recent discussions touching the beginnings of Christian history and the authenticity of the New Testament record The Galatian Epistle is, in fact, the key of New Testament Apologetics. Round it the Roman and Corinthian Letters group themselves, forming together a solid, impregnable quaternion, and supplying a fixed starting-point and an indubitable test for the examination of the critical questions belonging to the Apostolic age. Whatever else may be disputed, it is agreed that there was an apostle Paul, who wrote these four Epistles to certain Christian societies gathered out of heathenism, communities numerous, widely scattered, and containing men of advanced intelligence; and this within thirty years of the death of Jesus Christ. Every critic must reckon with this fact. The most sceptical criticism makes a respectful pause before our Epistle. Hopeless of destroying its testimony, Rationalism treats it with an even exaggerated deference; and seeks to extract evidence from it against its companion witnesses amongst the New Testament writings. This attempt, however misdirected, is a signal tribute to the importance of the document, and to the force with which the personality of the writer and the conditions of the time have

stamped themselves upon it. The deductions of the Baurian criticism appear to us to rest on a narrow and arbitrary examination of isolated passages; they spring from a mistaken *à priori* view of the historical situation. Granting however to these inferences, which will meet us as we proceed, their utmost weight, they still leave the testimony of Paul to the supernatural character of Christianity substantially intact.

Of the four major Epistles, this one is superlatively characteristic of its author. It is *Paulinissima Paulinarum*—most Pauline of Pauline things. It is largely autobiographical; hence its peculiar value. Reading it, we watch history in the making. We trace the rise of the new religion in the typical man of the epoch. The master-builder of the Apostolic Church stands before us, at the crisis of his work. He lets us look into his heart, and learn the secret of his power. We come to know the Apostle Paul as we know scarcely any other of the world's great minds. We find in him a man of the highest intellectual and spiritual powers, equally great in passion and in action, as a thinker and a leader of men. But at every step of our acquaintance the Apostle points us beyond himself; he says, "It is not I: it is Christ that lives in me." If this Epistle teaches us the greatness of Paul, it teaches us all the more the Divine greatness of Jesus Christ, before whom that kingly intellect and passionate heart bowed in absolute devotion.

The situation which the Epistle reveals and the personal references in which it abounds are full of interest at every point. They furnish quite essential data to the historian of the Early Church. We could wish that the Apostle, telling us so much, had told us

more. His allusions, clear enough, we must suppose, to the first readers, have lent themselves subsequently to very conflicting interpretations. But as they stand, they are invaluable. The fragmentary narrative of the Acts requires, especially in its earlier sections, all the illustration that can be obtained from other sources. The conversion of Paul, and the Council at Jerusalem, events of capital importance for the history of Apostolic times, are thereby set in a light certainly more complete and satisfactory than is furnished in Luke's narrative, taken by itself. And Paul's references to the Judean Church and its three "pillars," touch the crucial question of New Testament criticism, namely that concerning the relation of the Gentile Apostle to Jewish Christianity and the connection between his theology and the teaching of Jesus. Our judgement respecting the conflict between Peter and Paul at Antioch in particular will determine our whole conception of the legalist controversy, and consequently of the course of Church history during the first two centuries. Around these cursory allusions has gathered a contest only less momentous than that from which they sprung.

The personal and the doctrinal element are equally prominent in this Epistle; and appear in a combination characteristic of the writer. Paul's theology is the theology of experience. "It pleased God," he says, "to reveal His Son in me" (ch. i. 16). His teaching is cast in a psychological mould. It is largely a record of the Apostle's spiritual history; it is the expression of a living, inward process—a personal appropriation of Christ, and a growing realization of the fulness of the Godhead in Him. The doctrine of Paul was as far as possible removed from being the result of abstract deduction, or any mere combination of data externally

given. In his individual consciousness, illuminated by the vision of Christ and penetrated by the Spirit of God, he found his message for the world. "We believe, and therefore speak. We have received the Spirit of God, that we may know the things freely given us of God:" sentences like these show us very clearly how the Apostle's doctrine formed itself in his mind. His apprehension of Christ, above all of the cross, was the focus, the creative and governing centre, of all his thoughts concerning God and man, time and eternity. In the light of this knowledge he read the Old Testament, he interpreted the earthly life and teaching of Jesus. On the ground of this personal sense of salvation he confronted Peter at Antioch; on the same ground he appeals to the vacillating Galatians, sharers with himself in the new life of the Spirit. Here lies the nerve of his argument in this Epistle. The theory of the relation of the Law to the Abrahamic promise developed in the third chapter, is the historical counterpart of the relation of the legal to the evangelical consciousness, as he had experienced the two states in turn within his own breast. The spirit of Paul was a microcosm, in which the course of the world's religious evolution was summed up, and brought to the knowledge of itself.

The Apostle's influence over the minds of others was due in great part to the extraordinary force with which he apprehended the facts of his own spiritual nature. Through the depth and intensity of his personal experience he touched the experience of his fellows, he seized on those universal truths that are latent in the consciousness of mankind, "by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." But this knowledge of the things

of God was not the mere fruit of reflection and self-searching; it was "the ministration of the Spirit." Paul did not simply *know* Christ; he was one with Christ, "joined to the Lord, one spirit" with Him. He did not therefore speak out of the findings of his own spirit; the absolute Spirit, the Spirit of truth and of Christ, spoke in him. Truth, as he knew it, was the self-assertion of a Divine life. And so this handful of old letters, broken and casual in form, with their "rudeness of speech," their many obscurities, their rabbinical logic, have stirred the thoughts of men and swayed their lives with a power greater perhaps than belongs to any human utterances, saving only those of the Divine Master.

The features of Paul's style show themselves here in their most pronounced form. "The style is the man." And the whole man is in this letter. Other Epistles bring into relief this or that quality of the Apostle's disposition and of his manner as a writer; here all are present. The subtlety and trenchant vigour of Pauline dialectic are nowhere more conspicuous than in the discussion with Peter in ch. ii. The discourse on Promise and Law in ch. iii. is a master-piece of exposition, unsurpassed in its keenness of insight, breadth of view, and skill of application. Such passages as ch. i. 15, 16; ii. 19, 20; vi. 14, take us into the heart of the Apostle's teaching, and reveal its mystical depth of intuition. Behind the masterful dialectician we find the spiritual seer, the man of contemplation, whose fellowship is with the eternal and unseen. And the emotional temperament of the writer has left its impress on this Epistle not less distinctly than his mental and spiritual gifts. The denunciations of ch. i. 6—10; ii. 4, 5; iv. 9; v. 7—12; vi. 12—14, burn

with a concentrated intensity of passion, a sublime and holy scorn against the enemies of the cross, such as a nature like Paul's alone is capable of feeling. Nor has the Apostle penned anything on the other hand more amiable and touching, more winningly frank and tender in appeal, than the entreaty of ch. iv. 11—20. His last sentence, in ch. vi. 17, is an irresistible stroke of pathos. The ardour of his soul, his vivacity of mind and quick sensibility, are apparent throughout. Those sudden turns of thought and bursts of emotion that occur in all his Epistles and so much perplex their interpreters, are especially numerous in this. And yet we find that these interruptions are never allowed to divert the writer from his purpose, nor to destroy the sequence of his thought. They rather carry it forward with greater vehemence along the chosen course, as storms will a strong and well-manned ship. The Epistle is strictly a unity. It is written, as one might say, at a single breath, as if under pressure and in stress of mind. There is little of the amplitude of expression and the delight in lingering over some favourite idea that characterize the later Epistles. Nor is there any passage of sustained eloquence to compare with those that are found in the Roman and Corinthian letters. The business on which the Apostle writes is too urgent, his anxiety too great, to allow of freedom and discursiveness of thought. Hence this Epistle is to an unusual degree closely packed in matter, rapid in movement, and severe in tone.

In its construction the Epistle exhibits an almost dramatic character. It is full of action and animation. There is a gradual unfolding of the subject, and a skilful combination of scene and incident brought to bear on the solution of the crucial question. The Apostle

himself, the insidious Judaizers, and the wavering Galatians,—these are the protagonists of the action; with Peter and the Church at Jerusalem playing a secondary part, and Abraham and Moses, Isaac and Ishmael, appearing in the distance. The first Act conducts us rapidly from scene to scene till we behold Paul labouring amongst the Gentiles, and the Churches of Judea listening with approval to the reports of his success. The Council of Jerusalem opens a new stage in the history. Now Gentile liberties are at stake; but Titus' circumcision is successfully resisted, and Paul as the Apostle of the Uncircumcised is acknowledged by "the pillars" as their equal; and finally Peter, when he betrays the truth of the Gospel at Antioch, is corrected by the Gentile Apostle. The third chapter carries us away from the present conflict into the region of first principles,—to the Abrahamic Covenant with its spiritual blessing and world-wide promise, opposed by the condemning Mosaic Law, an opposition finally resolved by the coming of Christ and the gift of His Spirit of adoption. At this point the Apostle turns the gathered force of his argument upon his readers, and grapples with them front to front in the expostulation carried on from ch. iv. 8 to v. 12, in which the story of Hagar forms a telling episode. The fifth and closing Act, extending to the middle of ch. vi., turns on the antithesis of Flesh and Spirit, bringing home the contention to the region of ethics, and exhibiting to the Galatians the practical effect of their following the Pauline or the Judaistic leadership. Paul and the Primitive Church; Judaism and Gentile-Christian liberties; the Covenants of Promise and of Law, the circumcision or non-circumcision of the Galatians; the dominion of Flesh or Spirit: these are

the contrasts through which the Epistle advances. Its centre lies in the decisive question given in the *fourth* of these antitheses. If we were to fix it in a single point, ver. 2 of ch. v. is the sentence we should choose :—

"Behold, I Paul say unto you,
If ye be circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing."

The above analysis may be reduced to the common threefold division, followed in this exposition :—viz. (1) *Personal History,* ch. i. 11—ii. 21 ; (2) *Doctrinal Polemic,* ch. iii. 1—v. 12 ; (3) *Ethical Application,* ch. v. 13—vi. 10.

The epistolary Introduction forms the *Prologue,* ch. i. 1—10 ; and an *Epilogue* is appended, by way of renewed warning and protestation, followed by the concluding signature and benediction,—ch. vi. 11—18.

The Address occupies the first two verses of the Epistle.

I. On the one side is *the writer:* "Paul, an Apostle." In his earliest Letters (to Thessalonica) the title is wanting ; so also in Philippians and Philemon. The last instance explains the other two. To the Macedonian Churches Paul writes more in the style of friendship than authority : "for love's sake he rather entreats." With the Galatians it is different. He proceeds to define his apostleship in terms that should leave no possible doubt respecting its character and rights : "not from men," he adds, "nor through man ; but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, that raised Him from the dead."

This reads like a contradiction of some statement made by Paul s opposers. Had they insinuated that he *was* "an apostle from men," that his office was

derived, like their own, only from the mother Church in Jerusalem? Such insinuations would very well serve their purpose; and if they were made, Paul would be sure not to lose a moment in meeting them.

The word *apostle* had a certain latitude of meaning.* It was already, there is reason to believe, a term of Jewish official usage when our Lord applied it to His chosen Twelve. It signified a *delegate* or *envoy*, accredited by some public authority, and charged with a special message. We can understand therefore its application to the emissaries of particular Churches—of Jerusalem or Antioch, for example—despatched as their messengers to other Churches, or with a general commission to proclaim the Gospel. The recently discovered "Teaching of the Apostles" shows that this use of the title continued in Jewish-Christian circles to the end of the first century, alongside of the restricted and higher use. The lower apostleship belonged to Paul in common with Barnabas and Silas and many others.

In the earlier period of his ministry, the Apostle was seemingly content to rank in public estimation with his companions in the Gentile mission. But a time came when he was compelled to arrogate to himself the

* Compare Acts xiv. 4, 14 (*Barnabas and Paul*); 1 Thess. ii. 6 (*Paul and his comrades*); Rom. xvi. 7 (*Andronicus and Junias*); 2 Cor. viii. 23 (*Titus and others*, "apostles of the churches"); 2 Cor. xi. 13 ("false apostles": *Judaan emissaries*); also Rev. ii. 2; Heb. iii. 1; John xiii. 16. On the N.T. use of *apostle*, see Lightfoot's Galatians, pp. 92—101; but especially Huxtable's *Dissertation* in the Pulpit Commentary (Galatians), pp. xxiii.—l., the most satisfactory elucidation of the subject we have met with. Prebendary Huxtable however presses his argument too far, when he insists that St. Paul held his higher commission entirely in abeyance until the crisis of the Judaic controversy.

higher dignity. His right thereto was acknowledged at the memorable conference in Jerusalem by the leaders of the Jewish Church. So we gather from the language of ch. ii. 7—9. But the full exercise of his authority was reserved for the present emergency, when all his energy and influence were required to stem the tide of the Judaistic reaction. We can well imagine that Paul "gentle in the midst" of his flock and "not seeking to be of weight" (1 Thess. ii. 6, 7), had hitherto said as little as need be on the subject of his official rights. His modesty had exposed him to misrepresentations both in Corinth and in Galatia. He will "have" these people "to know" that his gospel is in the strictest sense Divine, and that he received his commission, as certainly as any of the Twelve, from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself (ver. 11).

"Not from men" excludes human derivation; "not through man," human intervention in the conferment of Paul's office. The singular number (*man*) replaces the plural in the latter phrase, because it stands immediately opposed to "Jesus Christ" (a striking witness this to His Divinity). The second clause carries the negation farther than the first; for a call from God may be, and commonly is, imposed by human hands. There are, says Jerome, four kinds of Christian ministers: first, those sent neither from men nor through man, like the prophets of old time and the Apostles; secondly, those who are from God, but through man, as it is with their legitimate successors; thirdly, those who are from men, but not from God, as when one is ordained through mere human favour and flattery; the fourth class consists of such as have their call neither from God nor man, but wholly from themselves, as with false prophets and the false apostles

of whom Paul speaks. His vocation, the Apostle declares, was superhuman, alike in its origin and in the channel by which it was conveyed. It was no voice of man that summoned Saul of Tarsus from the ranks of the enemies to those of the servants of Christ, and gave him the message he proclaimed. Damascus and Jerusalem in turn acknowledged the grace given unto him; Antioch had sent him forth on her behalf to the regions beyond: but he was conscious of a call anterior to all this, and that admitted of no earthly validation. "Am I not an apostle?" he exclaims, "have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1). "Truly the signs of the Apostle were wrought in him," both in the miraculous powers attending his office, and in those moral and spiritual qualities of a minister of God in which he was inferior to none.* For the exercise of his ministry he was responsible neither to "those of repute" at Jerusalem, nor to his censurers at Corinth; but to Christ who had bestowed it (1 Cor. iv. 3, 4).

The call of the Apostle proceeded also from "God the Father, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead." Christ was in this act the mediator, declaring the Supreme will. In other places, more briefly, he styles himself "Apostle by the will of God." His appointment took place by a Divine intervention, in which the ordinary sequence of events was broken through. Long after the Saviour in His bodily presence had ascended to heaven, when in the order of nature it was impossible that another Apostle should be elected, and when the administration of His Church had been for several years carried on by human hands, He appeared once more on earth for the purpose of making this man

* 1 Cor xv. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 2; vi. 3—10; xi. 5, 16—xii. 13.

His "minister and witness;" He appeared in the name of "the Father, who had raised Him from the dead." This interposition gave to Paul's ministry an exceptional character. While the mode of his election was in one aspect humbling, and put him in the position of "the untimely one," the "least of the Apostles," whose appearance in that capacity was unlooked for and necessarily open to suspicion; on the other hand, it was glorious and exalting, since it so richly displayed the Divine mercy and the transforming power of grace.

But why does he say, *who raised Him from the dead?* Because it was the *risen Jesus* that he saw, and that he was conscious of seeing in the moment of the vision. The revelation that arrested him before Damascus, in the same moment convinced him that Jesus was risen, and that he himself was called to be His servant. These two convictions were inseparably linked in Paul's recollections. As surely as God the Father had raised His Son Jesus from the dead and given Him glory, so surely had the glorified Jesus revealed Himself to Saul his persecutor to make him His Apostle. He was, not less truly than Peter or John, a witness of His resurrection. The message of the Resurrection was the burden of the Apostleship.

He adds, "and all the brethren which are with me." For it was Paul's custom to associate with himself in these official letters his fellow-labourers, present at the time. From this expression we gather that he was attended just now by a considerable band of companions, such as we find enumerated in Acts xx. 2—6, attending him on his journey from Ephesus to Corinth during the third missionary tour. This circumstance has some bearing on the date of the letter. Bishop

Lightfoot (in his Commentary) shows reason for believing that it was written, not from Ephesus as commonly supposed, but at a somewhat later time, from *Macedonia*. It is connected by numerous and close links of internal association with the Epistle to the Romans, which on this supposition speedily followed, and with 2 Corinthians, immediately preceding it. And the allusion of the text, though of no decisive weight taken by itself, goes to support this reasoning. Upon this hypothesis, our Epistle was composed in Macedonia, during the autumn of 57 (or possibly, 58) A.D. The emotion which surcharges 2 Corinthians runs over into Galatians: while the theology which labours for expression in Galatians finds ampler and calmer development in Romans.

II. Of *the readers*, "the churches of Galatia," it is not necessary to say much at present. The character of the Galatians, and the condition of their Churches, will speak for themselves as we proceed. *Galatian* is equivalent to *Gaul*, or *Kelt*. This people was a detached fragment of the great Western-European race, which forms the basis of our own Irish and West-British populations, as well as of the French nationality. They had conquered for themselves a home in the north of Asia Minor during the Gaulish invasion that poured over South-eastern Europe and into the Asiatic peninsula some three and a half centuries before. Here the Gallic intruders stubbornly held their ground; and only succumbed to the irresistible power of Rome. Defeated by the Consul Manlius in 189 B.C., the Galatians retained their autonomy, under the rule of native princes, until in the year 25 B.C., on the death of Amyntas, the country was made a province of the Empire. The people maintained their distinctive

character and speech despite these changes. At the same time they readily acquired Greek culture, and were by no means barbarians; indeed they were noted for their intelligence. In religion they seem to have largely imbibed the Phrygian idolatry of the earlier inhabitants.

The Roman Government had annexed to Galatia certain districts lying to the south, in which were situated most of the cities visited by Paul and Barnabas in their first missionary tour. This has led some scholars to surmise that Paul's "Galatians" were really Pisidians and Lycaonians, the people of Derbe, Lystra, and Pisidian Antioch. But this is improbable. The inhabitants of these regions were never called Galatians in common speech; and Luke distinguishes "the Galatic country" quite clearly from its southern borderlands. Besides, the Epistle contains no allusions, such as we should expect in the case supposed, to the Apostle's earlier and memorable associations with these cities of the South. Elsewhere he mentions them by name (2 Tim. iii. 11); and why not here, if he were addressing this circle of Churches?

The Acts of the Apostles relates nothing of Paul's sojourn in Galatia, beyond the fact that he twice "passed through the Galatic country" (Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23), on the first occasion during the second missionary journey, in travelling north and then westwards from Pisidia; the second time, on his way from Antioch to Ephesus, in the course of the third tour. Galatia lay outside the main line of Paul's evangelistic career, as the historian of the Acts describes it, outside the Apostle's own design, as it would appear from ch. iv. 13. In the first instance Galatia follows (in the order of the Acts), in the second precedes Phrygia,

a change which seems to indicate some new importance accruing to this region: the further clause in Acts xviii. 23, "strengthening all the disciples," shows that the writer was aware that by this time a number of Christian societies were in existence in this neighbourhood.

No *city* is mentioned in the address, but the *country* of Galatia only—the single example of the kind in Paul's Epistles. The Galatians were countryfolk rather than townsfolk. And the Church seems to have spread over the district at large, without gathering itself into any one centre, such as the Apostle had occupied in other parts of his Gentile field.

Still more significant is the curtness of this designation. Paul does not say, "To the Churches *of God* in Galatia," or "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ," as in other Epistles. He is in no mood for compliments. These Galatians are, he fears, "removing from God who had called them" (ver. 6). He stands in doubt of them. It is a question whether they are now, or will long continue, "Churches of God" at all. He would gladly commend them if he could; but he must instead begin with reproaches. And yet we shall find that, as the Apostle proceeds, his sternness gradually relaxes. He remembers that these "foolish Galatians" are his "children," once ardently attached to him (ch. iv. 12—20). His heart yearns towards them; he travails over them in birth again. Surely they will not forsake him, and renounce the gospel of whose blessings they had enjoyed so rich an experience (ch. iii. 3; v. 10). He calls them "brethren" once and again; and with this kindly word, holding out the hand of forgiveness, he concludes the letter.

CHAPTER II.

THE SALUTATION.

"Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."—GAL. i. 3—5.

THE greetings and benedictions of the Apostolic Letters deserve more attention from us than they sometimes receive. We are apt to pass over them as if they were a kind of pious formality, like the conventional phrases of our own epistles. But to treat them in such fashion is to do injustice to the seriousness and sincerity of Holy Scripture. This salutation of "Grace and Peace" comes from Paul's very heart. It breathes the essence of his gospel.

This formula appears to be of the Apostle's coining. Other writers, we may believe, borrowed it from him. *Grace* represents the common Greek salutation,—*joy to you*, χαίρειν changing to the kindred χάρις; while the more religious *peace* of the Hebrew, so often heard from the lips of Jesus, remains unaltered, only receiving from the New Covenant a tenderer significance. It is as though East and West, the old world and the new, met here and joined their voices to bless the Church and people of Jesus Christ.

Grace is the sum of all blessing bestowed by God;

peace, in its wide Hebraic range of meaning, the sum of all blessing experienced by man. *Grace* is the Father's goodwill and bounty in Christ to His undeserving children; *peace*, the rest and reconcilement, the recovered health and gladness of the child brought home to the Father's house, dwelling in the light of his Father's face. *Grace* is the fountain of redeeming love; *peace* is the "river of life proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb," that flows calm and deep through each believing soul, the river whose "streams make glad the city of God."

What could a pastor wish better for his people, or friend for the friend he loves most, than this double blessing? Paul's letters are perfumed with its fragrance. Open them where you will, they are breathing out, "Grace to you and peace." Paul has hard things to write in this Epistle, sorrowful complaints to make, grievous errors to correct; but still with "Grace and peace" he begins, and with "Peace and grace" he will end! And so this stern and reproachful letter to these "foolish Galatians" is all embalmed and folded up in grace and peace. That is the way to "be angry and sin not." So mercy rejoices over judgement.

These two benedictions, we must remember, go together. Peace comes through grace. The proud heart never knows peace; it will not yield to God the glory of His grace. It scorns to be a debtor, even to Him. The proud man stands upon his rights, upon his merits. And he will have them; for God is just. But peace is not amongst them. No sinful child of man deserves that. Is there wrong between your soul and God, iniquity hidden in the heart? Till that wrong is confessed, till you submit to the Almighty and your spirit bows at the Redeemer's cross, what hast thou

to do with peace? No peace in this world, or in any world, for him who will not be at peace with God. "When I kept silence," so the ancient confession runs (Ps. xxxii. 3—5), "my bones waxed old through my moaning all the day long"—that is why many a man is old before his time! because of this continual inward chafing, this secret, miserable war of the heart against God. "Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture was turned into the drought of summer"—the soul withered like grass, all the freshness and pure delight of life wasted and perishing under the steady, unrelenting heat of the Divine displeasure. "Then I said"—I could bear it no longer—"I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." And then peace came to the weary soul. The bitterness and hardness of life were gone; the heart was young again. The man was new born, a child of God.

But while Paul gives this salutation to all his Churches, his greeting is extended and qualified here in a peculiar manner. The Galatians were falling away from faith in Christ to Jewish ritualism. He does not therefore wish them "Grace and peace" in a general way, or as objects to be sought from any quarter or by any means that they might choose; but only "from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins." Here is already a note of warning and a tacit contradiction of much that they were tempted to believe. It would have been a mockery for the Apostle to desire for these fickle Galatians grace and peace on other terms. As at Corinth, so in Galatia, he is "determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Above the puerilities of their Jewish ritual, above the pettiness of their wrang-

ling factions, he directs his readers' gaze once more to the sacrifice of Calvary and the sublime purpose of God which it reveals.

Do *we* not need to be recalled to the same sight? We live in a distracted and distracting age. Even without positive unbelief, the cross is too frequently thrust out of view by the hurry and press of modern life. Nay, in the Church itself is it not in danger of being practically set on one side, amidst the throng of competing interests which solicit, and many of them justly solicit, our attention? We visit Calvary too seldom. We do not haunt in our thoughts the sacred spot, and linger on this theme, as the old saints did. We fail to attain "the fellowship of Christ's sufferings;" and while the cross is outwardly exalted, its inward meaning is perhaps but faintly realised. "Tell us something new," they say; "that story of the cross, that evangelical doctrine of yours we have heard it so often, we know it all so well!" If men are saying this, if the cross of Christ is made of none effect, its message staled by repetition, we must be strangely at fault either in the hearing or the telling. Ah, if we knew the cross of Christ, it would crucify us; it would possess our being. Its supremacy can never be taken from it. That cross is still the centre of the world's hope, the pillar of salvation. Let the Church lose her hold of it, and she loses everything. She has no longer any reason to exist.

I. So the Apostle's greeting invites his readers to contemplate anew *the Divine gift bestowed upon sinful men.* It invokes blessing upon them "from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins."

To see this gift in its greatness, let us go a little farther back; let us consider who the Christ is that

thus "gives Himself." He is, we are taught, the almoner of all the Divine bounties. He is not the object alone, but the depositary and dispenser of the Father's good pleasure to all worlds and all creatures. Creation is rooted in "the Son of God's love" (Col. i. 15—18). Universal life has its fountain in "the Only-begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father." The light that dispelled the weltering gloom of chaos, the more wondrous light that shone in the dawn of human reason, came from this "outbeaming of the Father's glory." Countless gifts had He, "the life of men, the Word that was from the beginning," bestowed on a world that knew Him not. Upon the chosen race, the people whom on the world's behalf he formed for Himself, He showered His blessings. He had given them promise and law, prophet and priest and king, gifts of faith and hope, holy obedience and brave patience and deep wisdom and prophetic fire and heavenly rapture; and His gifts to them have come through them to us, "partakers with them of the root and fatness of the olive tree."

But now, to crown all, *He gave Himself!* "The Word became flesh." The Son of God planted Himself into the stock of human life, made Himself over to mankind; He became the Son of man. So in the fulness of time came the fulness of blessing. Earlier bestowments were instalments and prophecies of this; later gifts are its outcome and its application. What could He have done more than this? What could the Infinite God do more, even for the most worthy, than He has done for us in "sending His Son, the Only-begotten, that we might live through Him!" Giving us Him, surely He will give us grace and peace.

And if our Lord Jesus Christ "gave Himself," is not that sufficient? What could Jewish ritual and circumcision add to this "fulness of the Godhead?" Why hunt after the shadows, when one has the substance? Such were the questions which the Apostle has to ask his Judaizing readers. And what, pray, do *we* want with modern Ritualism, and its scenic apparatus, and its priestly offices? Are these things designed to eke out the insufficiency of Christ? Will they recommend Him better than His own gospel and the pure influence of His Spirit avail to do in these latter days? Or has modern thought, to be sure, and the progress of the 19th century carried us beyond Jesus Christ, and created spiritual wants for which He has no supply? Paul at least had no anticipation of this failure. All the need of hungry human hearts and searching minds and sorrowing spirits, to the world's latest ages, the God of Paul, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is able to supply in Him. "We are complete in Him,"—if we but knew our completeness. The most advanced thinkers of the age will still find Jesus Christ in advance of them. Those who draw the most largely from His fulness, leave its depths unsounded. There are resources stored for the times to come in the revelation of Christ, which our age is too slight, too hasty of thought, to comprehend. We are straitened in ourselves; never in Him.

From this supreme gift we can argue down to the humblest necessities, the commonest trials of our daily lot. It adapts itself to the small anxieties of a struggling household, equally with the largest demands of our exacting age. "Thou hast given us Thy Son," says some one, "and wilt Thou not give us bread?" We have a generous Lord. His only complaint is that

we do not ask enough. "Ye are My friends," He says: "I have given My life for you. Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Giving us Himself, He has given us all things. Abraham and Moses, David and Isaiah, "Paul and Apollos and Cephas—yea the world itself, life and death, things present and to come—all are ours; and we are Christ's and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23). Such is the chain of blessing that hangs on this single gift.

Great as the gift is, it is not greater than our need. Wanting a Divine Son of man, human life remains a baffled aspiration, a pathway leading to no goal. Lacking Him, the race is incomplete, a body without its head, a flock that has no master. By the coming of Christ in the flesh human life finds its ideal realized; its haunting dream of a Divine helper and leader in the midst of men, of a spiritual and immortal perfection brought within its reach, has attained fulfilment. "God hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began." Jacob's vision has come true. There is the golden ladder, with its foot resting on the cold, stony earth, and its top on heaven's starry platform, with its angels ascending and descending through the darkness; and you may climb its steps, high as you will! So humanity receives its crown of life. Heaven and earth are linked, God and man reunited in the person of Jesus Christ.

But Paul will not suffer us to linger at Bethlehem. He hastens on to Calvary. The Atonement, not the Incarnation, is in his view the centre of Christianity. To the cross of Jesus, rather than to His cradle, he attaches our salvation. "Jesus Christ gave Himself"—

what for, and in what way? What was the errand that brought Him here, in such a guise, and at such a time? Was it to meet our *need*, to fulfil our human aspirations, to crown the moral edifice, to lead the race onward to the goal of its development? Yes—ultimately, and in the final issue, for "as many as receive Him"; it was to "present every man perfect in Christ." But that was not the primary object of His coming, of such a coming. Happy for us indeed, and for Him, if it could have been so. To come to a world waiting for Him, hearkening for the cry, "Behold thy God, O Israel," would have been a pleasant and a fitting thing. But to find Himself rejected by His own, to be spit upon, to hear the multitude shout, "Away with Him!" was this the welcome that he looked for? Yea surely, nothing else but this. For He gave Himself *for our sins*. He came to a world steeped in wickedness, seething with rebellion against God, hating Him because it hated the Father that sent Him, sure to say as soon as it saw Him, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Not therefore by way of incarnation and revelation alone, as it might have been for an innocent race; but by way of *sacrifice*, as a victim on the altar of expiation, "a lamb led to the slaughter,' He gave Himself up for us all. "To deliver us from an evil world," says the Apostle; to mend a faulty and imperfect world, something less and other would have sufficed.

Extreme diseases call for extreme remedies. The case with which our good Physician had to deal was a desperate one. The world was sick at heart; its moral nature rotting to the core. Human life was shattered to its foundation. If it was to be saved, if the race was to escape perdition, the fabric must be

reconstructed upon another basis, on the ground of a new righteousness, outside ourselves and yet akin to us, near enough to take hold of us and grow into us, which should draw to itself the broken elements of human life, and as a vital organic force refashion them, "creating" men "anew in Christ Jesus"—a righteousness availing before God, and in its depth and width sufficient to bear a world's weight. Such a new foundation Jesus Christ has laid in His death. "He laid down His life for us," the Shepherd for the sheep, the Friend for His perishing friends, the Physician for sufferers who had no other remedy. It had come to this,—either He must die, or we must die for ever. Such was the sentence of the All-wise Judge; on that judgement the Redeemer acted. "His judgements are a great deep"; and in this sentence there are depths of mystery into which we tremble to look, "secret things that belong unto the Lord our God." But so it was. There was no way but this, no moral possibility of saving the world, and yet saving Him the accursed death.

If there had been, would not the Almighty Father have found it out? would He not have "taken away the cup" from those white, quivering lips? No; He must *die*. He must consent to be "made sin, made a curse" for us. He must humble His stainless innocence, humble His glorious Godhead down to the dust of death. He must die, at the hands of the men He created and loved, with the horror of the world's sin fastened on Him; die under a blackened heaven, under the averting of the Father's face. And He did it. He said, "Father, Thy will be done. Smite the Shepherd; but let the sheep escape." So He "gave Himself for our sins."

Ah, it was no easy march, no holiday pageant, the coming of the Son of God into this world of ours. He "came to *save sinners*." Not to help good men—this were a grateful task; but to redeem bad men—the hardest work in God's universe. It tasked the strength and the devotion of the Son of God. Witness Gethsemane. And it will cost His Church something, more haply than we dream of now, if the work of the Redeemer is to be made effectual, and "the travail of His soul satisfied."

In pity and in sorrow was that gift bestowed; in deep humility and sorrow must it be accepted. It is a very humbling thing to "receive the atonement," to be made righteous on such terms as these. A man who has done well, can with satisfaction accept the help given him to do better. But to know that one has done very ill, to stand in the sight of God and truth condemned, marked with the disgrace that the crucifixion of the Son of God has branded on our human nature, with every stain of sin in ourselves revealed in the light of His sacrifice, is a sore abasement. When one has been compelled to cry out, "Lord, save; or I perish!" he has not much left to plume himself upon. There was Saul himself, a perfect moralist, "blameless in the righteousness of the law." Yet he must confess, "How to perform that which is good I find not. In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Wretch that I am, who shall deliver me?" Was not this mortifying to the proud young Pharisee, the man of strict conscience and high-souled moral endeavour? It was like death. And whoever has with sincerity made the same attempt to attain in the strength of his will to a true virtue, has tasted of this bitterness.

This however is what many cannot understand. The proud heart says, "No; I will not stoop to that. I have my faults, my defects and errors, not a few. But as for what you call *sin*, as for guilt and inborn depravity, I am not going to tax myself with anything of the kind. Leave me a little self-respect." So with the whole herd of the self-complacent, half-religious Laodiceans. Once a week they confess themselves "miserable sinners," but their sins against God never yet cost them one half hour of misery. And Paul's "gospel is hid to them." If they read this Epistle, they cannot tell what it is all about; why Paul makes so much ado, why these thunderings of judgement, these cries of indignation, these beseechings and protestings and redoubled arguments,—all because a parcel of foolish Galatians wanted to play at being Jews! They are inclined to think with Festus, that this good Paul was a little beside himself. Alas! to such men, content with the world's good opinion and their own, the death of Christ is made of none effect. Its moral grandeur, its infinite pathos, is lost upon them. They pay it a conventional respect, but as for *believing* in it, as for making it their own, and dying with Christ to live in Him—they have no idea what it means. That, they will tell you, is "mysticism," and they are practical men of the world. They have never gone out of themselves, never discovered their moral insufficiency. These are they of whom Jesus said, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." It is our human independence, our moral self-conceit, that robs us of the Divine bounty. How should God give His righteousness to men so well furnished with their own? "Blessed" then "are the poor in spirit"; blessed are the broken in heart—poor

enough, broken enough, bankrupt enough to stoop to a Saviour "who gave Himself for our sins."

II. Sinful men have made an *evil world.* The world, as Paul knew it, was evil indeed. "The existing evil age," he says, the world as it then was, in contrast with the glory of the perfected Messianic kingdom.

This was a leading distinction of the rabbinical schools; and the writers of the New Testament adopt it, with the necessary modification, that "the coming age," in their view, commences with the *Parousia*, the full advent of the Messiah King.* The period that intervenes since His first appearing is transitional, belonging to both eras. It is the conclusion of "this world," † to which it appertains in its outward and material relations; ‡ but under the perishing form of the present there lies hidden for the Christian believer the seed of immortality, "the earnest" of his future and complete inheritance. § Hence the different and seemingly contradictory ways in which Scripture speaks of the world that now is.

To Paul at this time the world wore its darkest aspect. There is a touching emphasis in the order of this clause. "The present world, *evil as it is:*" the words are a sigh for deliverance. The Epistles to Corinth show us how the world just now was using the Apostle. The wonder is that one man could bear so much. "We are made as the filth of the world," he says, "the offscouring of all things." ‖ So the world treated its greatest living benefactor. And as for his

* 2 Thess. i. 5—7; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Heb. x. 12, 13; 1 Pet. v. 10.
† 1 Cor. x. 11; Heb. ix. 26.
‡ 1 Cor. vii. 31; 1 John ii. 17.
§ Rom. viii. 18; Eph. i. 13, 14.
‖ 1 Cor. iv. 9—13; xv. 30, 32; 2 Cor. vi. 4, 10; xi. 16, 33.

Master—"the princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory." Yes, it was a bad old world, that in which Paul and the Galatians lived—false, licentious, cruel. And that "evil world" still exists.

True, the world, as we know it, is vastly better than that of Paul's day. Not in vain have Apostles taught, and martyrs bled, and the Church of Christ witnessed and toiled through so many ages. "Other men have laboured; we enter into their labours." An English home of to-day is the flower of the centuries. To those cradled in its pure affections, endowed with health and honourable work and refined tastes, the world must be, and was meant to be, in many aspects a bright and pleasant world. Surely the most sorrowful have known days in which the sky was all sunshine and the very air alive with joy, when the world looked as when it came forth fresh from its Creator's hand, "and behold, it was very good." There is nothing in the Bible, nothing in the spirit of true religion to damp the pure joy of such days as these. But there are "the days of darkness;" and they are many. The Serpent has crept into our Paradise. Death breathes on it his fatal blast.

And when we look outside the sheltered circles of home-life and Christian brotherhood, what a sea of misery spreads around us. How limited and partial is the influence of religion. What a mass of unbelief and godlessness surges up to the doors of our sanctuaries. What appalling depths of iniquity exist in modern society, under the brilliant surface of our material civilization. And however far the dominance of sin in human society may be broken—as, please God, it shall be broken, still evil is likely to remain in many tempting and perilous forms until the world is burnt to

ashes in the fires of the Last Judgement. Is it not an evil world, where every morning newspaper serves up to us its miserable tale of disaster and of crime, where the Almighty's name is "all the day blasphemed," and every night drunkenness holds its horrid revels and the daughters of shame walk the city streets, where great Christian empires tax the poor man's bread and make his life bitter to maintain their huge standing armies and their cruel engines of war, and where, in this happy England and its cities teeming with wealth, there are thousands of patient, honest working women, whose life under the fierce stress of competition is a veritable slavery, a squalid, dreary struggle just to keep hunger from the door? Ay, it is a world so evil that no good and right-thinking man who knows it, would care to live in it for a single day, but for the hope of helping to make it better.

Now it was the purpose of Jesus Christ, that for those who believe in Him this world's evil should be brought absolutely to an end. He promises a full deliverance from all that tempts and afflicts us here. With sin, the root of evil, removed, its bitter fruits at last will disappear. We shall rise to the life immortal. We shall attain our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul. Kept from the evil of the world while they remain in it, enabled by His grace to witness and contend against it, Christ's servants shall then be lifted clean out for it of ever. "Father, I will," prayed Jesus, "that they also whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me where I am." To that final salvation, accomplished in the redemption of our body and the setting up of Christ's heavenly kingdom, the Apostle's words look forward: "that He might deliver us *out of* this present evil world." This was

the splendid hope which Paul offered to the dying and despairing world of his day. The Galatians were persuaded of it and embraced it; he entreats them not to let it go.

The self-sacrifice of Christ, and the deliverance it brings, are both, the Apostle concludes, "according to the will of God, even our Father." The wisdom and might of the Eternal are pledged to the work of human redemption. The cross of Jesus Christ is the manifesto of Infinite Love. Let him therefore who rejects it, know against Whom he is contending. Let him who perverts and falsifies it, know with what he is trifling. He who receives and obeys it, may rest assured that all things are working for his good. For all things are in the hands of our God and Father; "to Whom," let us say with Paul, "be glory for ever. Amen."

CHAPTER III.

THE ANATHEMA.

"I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another *gospel:* only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For am I now persuading men, or God? or am I seeking to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ."—GAL. i. 6—10.

AFTER the Salutation in Paul's Epistles comes the Thanksgiving. *Εὐχαριστῶ* or *Εὐλογητός*—these are the words we expect first to meet. Even in writing to Corinth, where there was so much to censure and deplore, he begins, "I give thanks to my God always for you." This letter deviates from the Apostle's devout and happy usage. Not "I give thanks," but "I marvel;" not blessing, but *anathema* is coming from his lips: a surprise that jars all the more upon one's ears, because it follows on the sublime doxology of the preceding verse. "I marvel to see you so quickly falling away to another gospel. . . . But if any one preach unto you any gospel other than that ye received—ay, though it were ourselves, or an angel from heaven—I have said once, and I say again, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA."

These words were well calculated to startle the Galatians out of their levity. They are like a lightning-flash which shows one to be standing on the edge of a precipice. We see at once the infinite seriousness of the Judaic controversy, the profound gulf that lies between Paul and his opposers. He is for open war. He is in haste to fling his gage of defiance against these enemies of the cross. With all his tact and management, his readiness to consult the susceptibilities and accommodate the scruples of sincere consciences, the Apostle can find no room for conciliation here. He knows the sort of men he has to deal with. He perceives that the whole truth of the Gospel is at stake. Not circumstantials, but essentials; not his personal authority, but the honour of Christ, the doctrine of the cross, is involved in this defection. He must speak plainly; he must act strongly, and at once; or the cause of the Gospel is lost. "If I continued any longer to please men," he says, "I should not be a servant of Christ." To stand on terms with such opponents, to palter with this "other gospel," would be treason against Him. There is but one tribunal at which this quarrel can be decided. To Him "who had called" the Galatian believers "in Christ's grace," who by the same grace had called the Apostle to His service and given him the message he had preached to them—to *God* he appeals. In His name, and by the authority conferred upon him and for which he must give account, he pronounces these troublers "anathema." They are enemies of Christ, by their treachery excluded from His kingdom.

However unwelcome, however severe the course the Apostle takes, he has no alternative. "For now," he cries, "is it *men* that I persuade, or *God?*" He must

do his duty, let who will condemn. Paul was ready to go all lengths in pleasing men in consistence with loyalty to Christ, where he could do it "for their good, unto edification." But if their approval clashed with God's, then it became "a very small thing:" * he did not heed it one jot. Such is the temper of mind which the Epistles to Corinth disclose in Paul at this juncture. In the same spirit he indites these trenchant and displeasing words.

With a heavy heart Paul has taken up his pen. If we judge rightly of the date of this letter, he had just passed through the darkest hour of his experience, when not his life alone, but the fate of his Gentile mission hung in the balance. His expulsion from Ephesus, coming at the same time as the Corinthian revolt, and followed by a prostrating attack of sickness, had shaken his soul to its depths. Never had his heart been so torn with anxiety, never had he felt himself so beaten down and discomfited, as on that melancholy journey from Ephesus to Macedonia. † "Out of anguish of heart and with many tears" and after-relentings (2 Cor. ii. 4; vii. 8) he wrote his First letter to Corinth. And this Epistle is even more severe. There runs through it a peculiar mental tension, an exaltation of feeling such as prolonged and deep suffering leaves behind in a nature like Paul's. "The marks of Jesus" (ch. vi. 17) are visible, impressed on his spirit no less than on his body. The Apostle's heart is full to overflowing. Its warm glow is felt under the calmer course of narrative and argument: while at the beginning and end of the Epistle it breaks forth in language of burning indignation and melting pathos.

* 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4; 2 Cor. v. 9—12; xii. 19.

† 2 Cor. i. 8—10; ii. 12, 13; iv. 8—11; vii. 5—7.

Before advancing a single step, before entering on any sort of explanation or discussion, his grief at the fickleness of his Galatian children and his anger against their seducers must find expression.

These sentences demand, before we proceed further, a few words of exegetical definition. For the reference of "so quickly" it is needless to go beyond the verb it qualifies. The Apostle cannot surely mean, "*so soon* falling away (after your conversion)." For the Galatian Churches had been founded five, if not seven, years before this time; and the backsliding of recent converts is less, and not more, surprising than of established believers. What astonishes Paul is the *suddenness* of this movement, the facility with which the Galatians yielded to the Judaizing "persuasion," the rapid spread of this new leaven. As to the double "other" (ἕτερον, *different*, R.V.—ἄλλο) of vv. 6 and 7, and the connection of the idiomatic "only" (εἰ μή, *except*),—we regard the second *other* as an abrupt correction of the first; while the *only* clause, extending to the end of ver. 7, mediates between the two, qualifying the statement "There is no other gospel," by showing in what sense the writer at first had spoken of "another." "Ye are falling away," says he, "to another sort of gospel—which is not another, except that there are certain that trouble you and would fain pervert the gospel of Christ." The word *gospel* is therefore in the first instance applied ironically. Paul yields the sacred title up to his opponents, only to snatch it out of their false hands. "*Another* gospel! there is only one; although there are men that falsify it, and seek to foist something else upon you in its name." Seven times in this context (vv. 6—11) does the Apostle reiterate, in noun or verb, this precious

word, as though he could not let it go. A strange sort of "good news" for the Galatians, that they must be circumcised forsooth, and observe the Jewish Kalendar! (ch. v. 2, 3; vi. 12; iv. 9, 10.)

I. In Paul's view, there is but one gospel for mankind. *The gospel of Jesus Christ bears a fixed, inviolable character.*

On this position the whole teaching of Paul rests,—and with it, may we not add, Christianity itself? However variously we may formulate the essentials of a Christian man's faith, we are generally agreed that there are such essentials, and that they are found in Paul's gospel to the Gentiles. With him the good tidings about Christ constituted a very definite and, as we should say, *dogmatic* body of truth. In whatever degree his gospel has been confused and overlaid by later teachings, to his own mind its terms were perfectly clear, and its authority incontestable. With all its breadth, there is nothing nebulous, nothing limp or hesitating about the theology of Paul. In its main doctrines it is fixed and hard as adamant; and at the challenge of this Judaistic perversion it rings out an instant and peremptory denial. It was the ark of God on which the Jewish troublers laid their unholy hands. "Christ's grace" is lodged in it. God's call to mankind was conveyed by these "good tidings." The Churches which the Apostle had planted were "God's husbandry, God's building;" and woe to the man who tampered with the work, or sought to lay another foundation than that which had been laid (1 Cor. iii. 5—11). To distort or mutilate "the word of the truth of the gospel," to make it mean now one thing and now another, to disturb the faith of half-instructed Christians by captious reasonings and self-interested per-

versions, was a capital offence, a sin against God and a crime against humanity. Paul possesses in his gospel truth of unspeakable value to mankind, the supreme revelation of God's mercy to the world. And he is prepared to launch his anathema against every wilful impugner, no matter what his pretensions, or the quarter from which he comes.

"Well," it may be said, "this is sheer religious intolerance. Paul is doing what every dogmatist, every ecclesiastical bigot has done in his turn. His beliefs are, to be sure, *the* truth; and accordingly he unchurches and anathematizes those who cannot agree with him. With all his nobility of mind, there is in Paul a leaven of Jewish rancour. He falls short of the sweet reasonableness of Jesus." So some will say, and in saying claim to represent the mild and tolerant spirit of our age. But is there not in every age an intolerance that is just and necessary? There is a logical intolerance of sophistry and trifling. There is a moral intolerance of impurity and deceit. And there is a religious intolerance, which includes both these and adds to them a holy jealousy for the honour of God and the spiritual welfare of mankind. It is mournful indeed to think how many crimes have been perpetrated under the cloak of pious zeal. *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.* The corruption of Christianity by human pride and cruelty has furnished copious illustrations of the terrible line of Lucretius. But the perversion of this noblest instinct of the soul does not take away either its reasonableness or its use. The quality of a passion is one thing; the mode of its expression is another. The hottest fires of bigotry are cold when compared with the scorching intolerance of Christ's denunciations of the Pharisees. The anathemas of

Jesus and of Paul are very different from those of arrogant pontiffs, or of narrow sectaries, inflamed with the idolatry of their own opinions. After all, the zeal of the rudest fanatic in religion has more in it of manly worth and moral capability than the languors of a blasé scepticism, that sits watching with amused contempt the strife of creeds and the search of human hearts after the Living God. There is an idle, listless, cowardly tolerance, as there is an intolerance that is noble and just.

The *one gospel* has had many interpreters. Their voices, it must be confessed, sound strangely discordant. While the teachings of Christianity excite so intensely a multitude of different minds, of every variety of temper and capacity, contradiction will inevitably arise. Nothing is easier than to scoff at "the Babel of religious opinions." Christian truth is necessarily refracted and discoloured in passing through disordered natures and defective minds. And, alas, that Church which claims to hold the truth without possibility of error or variation, has perverted Christ's gospel most of all.

But notwithstanding all differences, there exists a large and an increasing measure of agreement amongst the great body of earnest Christians. Slowly, yet surely, one debate after another comes to its settlement. The noise and publicity with which discussion on matters of faith is carried on in an age of religious freedom, and when liberty of thought has outrun mental discipline, should not lead us to exaggerate the extent of our disagreements. In the midst of human controversy and error, the Spirit of truth is carrying on His work. He is the supreme witness of Jesus Christ. And He abides with us for ever. The newly awakened

historical conscience of our times is visibly making for unity. The Church is going back to the New Testament. And the more thoroughly she does this, the more directly and truthfully she addresses herself to the original record and comes face to face with Christ and His Apostles there, so much the more shall we realize the oneness and certainty of "the faith once delivered to the saints." Beneath the many superstructures, faulty and changing in their form, we reach the one "foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." There we touch solid rock. "The unity of the faith" lies in "the knowledge of the Son of God." Of Him we shall learn most from those who knew Him best. Let us transport ourselves into the fellowship of His first disciples; and listen to His gospel as it came fresh from the lips of Peter and John and Paul, and the Divine Master Himself. Let us bid the voices of the centuries be silent, that we may *hear Him.*

For the Galatian readers, as for Paul, there could be but *one gospel.* By his voice the call of God had reached their hearts, (ver. 6; ch. v. 8). The witness of the Spirit of God and of Christ in the supernatural gifts they had received, and in the manifold fruit of a regenerate life (ch. iii. 2—5; v. 22, 23), was evidence to them that the Apostle's message was "the true gospel of the grace of God." This they had gratefully acknowledged at the time of his first visit (ch. iv. 15). The proclamation of the crucified and risen Christ had brought to them unspeakable blessing. Through it they received the knowledge of God; they were made consciously sons of God, heirs of life eternal (ch. iii. 26; iv. 6—9; vi. 8). To entertain any other gospel, after this experience and all these professions, was an act of

apostasy. "Ye are deserting (like runaway soldiers), *turning renegades* from God:" such is the language in which Paul taxes his readers. In listening to the persuasion of the Judaists, they were "disobeying the truth" (ch. v. 7, 8). They were disloyal to conscience; they were trifling with the most sacred convictions of their lives, and with the testimony of the Spirit of God. They were forgetting the cross of Christ, and making His death of none effect. Surely they must have been "bewitched" to act thus; some deadly spell was upon them, which had laid memory and conscience both to sleep (ch. ii. 21—iii. 3).

The nature and the contents of the two "gospels" current in Galatia will be made clear in the further course of the Epistle. They were the gospels of Grace and of Law respectively; of Salvation by Faith, and by Works; of life in the Spirit, and in the Flesh; of the Cross and the Resurrection on the one hand, and of Circumcision and the Kalendar and "Clean meats" on the other; the gospels of inwardness, and of externalism—of Christ, and of self. The conflict between these two was the great struggle of Paul's life. His success was, historically speaking, the salvation of Christianity.

But this contention did not end with his victory. The Judaistic perversion appealed to tendencies too persistent in our nature to be crushed at one blow. The gospel of externalism is dear to the human heart. It may take the form of culture and moralities; or of "services" and sacraments and churchly order; or of orthodoxy and philanthropy. These and such things make themselves our idols; and trust in them takes the place of faith in the living Christ. It is not enough that the eyes of our heart should once have seen the

Lord, that we should in other days have experienced "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is possible to forget, possible to "remove from Him that called us in the grace of Christ." With little change in the form of our religious life, its inward reality of joy in God, of conscious sonship, of fellowship in the Spirit, may be utterly departed. The gospel of formalism will spring up and flourish on the most evangelical soil, and in the most strictly Pauline Churches. Let it be banned and barred out never so completely, it knows how to find entrance, under the simplest modes of worship and the soundest doctrine. The serried defence of Articles and Confessions constructed against it will not prevent its entrance, and may even prove its cover and intrenchment. Nothing avails, as the Apostle says, but a constant "new creation." The life of God in human souls is sustained by the energy of His Spirit, perpetually renewed, ever proceeding from the Father and the Son. "The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." This is the true orthodoxy. The vitality of his personal faith in Christ kept Paul safe from error, faithful in will and intellect to the *one gospel.*

II. We have still to consider the import of *the judgement pronounced by Paul upon those who pervert the gospel of Christ.* "Let him be anathema. Even should it be ourselves, or an angel from heaven, *let him be anathema.*"

These are tremendous words. Commentators have been shocked at the Apostle's damning his opponents after this fashion, and have sought to lighten the weight of this awful sentence. It has been sometimes toned down into an act of excommunication or ecclesiastical

censure. But this explanation will not hold. Paul could not think of subjecting "an angel" to a penalty like that. He pronounced excommunication against disorderly members of the Thessalonian Church; and in 1 Cor. v. 1—8 he gives directions for the carrying out of a similar decree, attended with severe bodily affliction supernaturally adjudged, against a sinner whose presence grossly stained the purity of the Church. But this sentence goes beyond either of those. It contemplates the exclusion of the offenders from the Covenant of grace, their loss of final salvation.

Thrice besides has Paul used this ominous word. The cry "Jesus is anathema," in 1 Cor. xii. 3, reveals with a lurid effect the frenzied malignity towards Christ of which the spirit of evil is sometimes capable. In a very different connection the word appears in Rom. ix. 3; where Paul "could wish himself anathema from Christ," if that were possible, for his brethren's sake; he could find it in his heart to be cut off for ever from that love of God in Christ of which he has just spoken in terms of unbounded joy and confidence (Rom. viii. 31—39), and banished from the heavenly kingdom, if through his exclusion his Jewish kindred might be saved. Self-sacrifice can go no further. No heavier loss than this could be conceived for any human being. Nearest to our passage is the imprecation at the end of 1 Corinthians: "If any man love not the Lord, let him be anathema,"—a judgement proclaimed against cold and false hearts, knowing His love, bearing His name, but with no true love to Him.

This Greek word in its Biblical use has grown out of the *chérem* of the Old Testament, the *ban* declared against that which was cut off from the Divine mercies and exposed to the full sweep of judgement. Thus in

Deut. xiii. 12—18, the city whose people should "go and serve other gods," is declared *chérem* (*anathema*), an "accursed," or "devoted thing" (R.V.), on which ensues its destruction by sword and fire, leaving it to remain "a ruin-heap for ever." Similarly in Joshua vi., vii., the spoil of Jericho is *anathema*, Achan's theft is therefore *anathema*, and Israel is made by it *anathema* until "the accursed thing is destroyed" from among the people. Such were the recollections associated with this word in the Mosaic law, which it would inevitably carry with it to the minds of those against whom it was now directed. And there is nothing in later Jewish usage to mitigate its force.

Now the Apostle is not writing like a man in a passion, who flings out his words as missiles, eager only to wound and confound his opponents. He repeats the sentence. He quotes it as one that he had already affirmed in the hearing of his readers. The passage bears the marks of well-weighed thought and judicial solemnity. In pronouncing this judgement on "the troublers," Paul acts under the sense of Apostolic responsibility. We must place the sentence in the same line as that of Peter against Ananias and Sapphira, and of Paul himself against Elymas the Cypriot sorcerer, and against the incestuous Corinthian. In each case there is a supernatural insight and authorization, "the authority which the Lord gave" and which is wielded by His inspired Apostle. The exercise of this judicial function was one of "the signs of the Apostle." This was the proof of "Christ speaking in him" which Paul was so loth to give at Corinth,* but which at this crisis of his ministry

* 2 Cor. x. 1—11; xiii. 1—10; 1 Cor. iv 18—21.

he was compelled to display. And if he "reckons to be bold against" his adversaries in Galatia, he knows well the ground on which he stands.

His anathema struck at men who were the worst enemies of Christ. "We can do nothing against the truth," he says; "but for the truth" he was ready to do and dare everything,—to "come with a rod," as he tells the proud Corinthians. There was no authority, however lofty, that he was not warranted to use on Christ's behalf, no measure, however severe, from which he would shrink, if it were required in defence of the truth of the Gospel. "He possesses weapons, not fleshly, but mighty through God"; and he is prepared to bring them all into play rather than see the gospel perverted or overthrown. Paul will hurl his anathema at the prince of the archangels, should He come "preaching another gospel," tempting his children from their allegiance to Christ. This bolt was not shot a moment too soon. Launched against the legalist conspiracy, and followed up by the arguments of this and the Roman Epistle, it saved the Church from being overpowered by reactionary Judaism. The Apostle's judgement has marked the gospel of the cross for all time as God's inviolable truth, guarded by lightnings.

The sentences of judgement pronounced by the Apostles present a striking contrast to those that have fulminated from the Chair of their self-styled successors. In the Canons of the Council of Trent, for example, we have counted one hundred and thirty-five anathemas. A large proportion of these are concerned with the rights of the priesthood; others with complicated and secondary points of doctrine; some are directed virtually against the teaching of Paul himself. Here is one

specimen: "If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else but a trust in the Divine mercy, remitting sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this trust alone by which we are justified: let him be anathema." * Again, "If any one shall say that the Canon of the Mass contains errors, and therefore should be abrogated: let him be anathema." † In the closing session, the final act of the presiding Cardinal was to pronounce, "Anathema to all heretics;" to which the assembled prelates shouted in response, "Anathema, anathema." With this imprecation on their lips the Fathers of the Church concluded their pious labours. It was the Reformation, it was "the liberty of the sons of God" that Rome anathematized. Paul's censure holds good against all the Conciliar Canons and Papal Bulls that contravene it. But twice has he pronounced this awful word; once against any that "love not the Lord," a second time upon those who wilfully pervert His gospel. The Papal anathemas sound like the maledictions of an angry priesthood, jealous for its prerogatives; here we have the holy severity of an inspired Apostle, concerned only for the truth, and for his Master's honour. There speaks the conscious "lord over God's heritage," wearing the triple crown, wielding the powers of Interdict and Inquisition, whose word sets armies in motion and makes kings tremble on their seats. Here a feeble, solitary man, "his bodily presence weak, his speech contemptible," hunted from place to place, scourged and stoned, shut up for years in prison, who could not, except for love's sake, command the meanest service. How conspicuous in the one case, how wanting in the other, is the might of the Spirit and the

* Session vi., Can. xii. † Session xxii., Can. vi.

dignity of the inspired word, the transcendence of moral authority.

It is *the moral conduct* of those he judges that determines in each case the sentence passed by the Apostle. For a man knowing Jesus Christ, as we presume the members of the Corinthian Church did know Him, not to love Him, argues a bad heart. Must not we count *ourselves* accursed, if with our knowledge of Christ we had no love for Him? Such a man is already virtually *anathema.* He is severed as a branch from its vine, ready to be gathered for the burning (John xv. 6). And these Galatian disturbers were something worse than mere mistaken enthusiasts for their native Jewish rites. Their policy was dishonourable (ch. iv. 17). They made the gospel of Christ subservient to factious designs. They sought to win credit with their fellow-countrymen and to escape the reproach of the cross by imposing circumcision on the Gentiles (ch. ii. 4; vi. 12, 13). They prostituted religion to selfish and party purposes. They sacrificed truth to popularity, the glory of Christ and the cross to their own. They were of those whom the Apostle describes as "walking in craftiness and handling the word of God deceitfully," who "traffic" in the gospel, peddling with it as with petty wares, cheapening and adulterating it like dishonest hucksters to make their own market by it (2 Cor. ii. 17; iv. 2). Did not Paul do well to smite them with the rod of his mouth? Justly has he marked with the brand of this fiery anathema the false minister, "who serves not the Lord Christ, but his own belly."

But does this declaration preclude in such a case the possibility of repentance? We trow not. It declares the doom which is due to any, be he man or angel, who

should do what these "troublers" are doing. It is a general sentence, and has for the individuals concerned the effect of a warning, like the announcement made concerning the Traitor at the Last Supper. However unlikely repentance might be in either instance, there is nothing to forbid it. So when Peter said to Simon Magus, "Thy money perish with thee!" he nevertheless continued, "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (Acts viii. 20—22). To his worst opponents, on any sign of contrition, Paul, we may be sure, would have gladly said the same.

THE PERSONAL HISTORY.

CHAPTER i. 11—ii. 21.

CHAPTER IV.

PAUL'S GOSPEL REVEALED BY CHRIST.

"For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but *it came to me* through revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havock of it: and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." —GAL. i. 11—14.

HERE the Epistle begins in its main purport. What has gone before is so much exordium. The sharp, stern sentences of vv. 6—10 are like the roll of artillery that ushers in the battle. The mists rise from the field. We see the combatants arrayed on either side. In due order and with cool self-command the Apostle proceeds to marshal and deploy his forces. His truthful narrative corrects the misrepresentations of his opponents, and repels their attack upon himself. His powerful dialectic wrests from their hands and turns against them their weapons of Scriptural proof. He wins the citadel of their position, by establishing the claim of the men of faith to be the sons of Abraham. On the ruins of confuted legalism he builds up an impregnable fortress for Christian liberty, an immortal vindication of the gospel of the grace of God.

The cause of Gentile freedom at this crisis was bound up with the person of the Apostle Paul. His Gospel and his Apostleship must stand or fall together. The former was assailed through the latter. He was himself just now "the pillar and stay of the truth." If his character had been successfully attacked and his influence destroyed, nothing, humanly speaking, could have saved Gentile Christendom at this decisive moment from falling under the assaults of Judaism. When he begins his crucial appeal with the words, "Behold, *I Paul* say unto you" (ch. v. 2), we feel that the issue depends upon the weight which his readers may attach to his personal affirmation. He pits his own truthfulness, his knowledge of Christ, his spiritual discernment and authority, and the respect due to himself from the Galatians, against the pretensions of the new teachers. The comparison is not indeed so open and express as that made in 2 Corinthians; none the less it tacitly runs through this Epistle. Paul is compelled to put himself in the forefront of his argument. In the eyes of his children in the faith, he is bound to vindicate his Apostolic character, defamed by Jewish malice and untruth.

The first two chapters of this Epistle are therefore Paul's *Apologia pro vita sua*. With certain chapters in 2 Corinthians, and scattered passages in other letters, they form the Apostle's autobiography, one of the most perfect self-portraitures that literature contains. They reveal to us the man more effectively than any ostensible description could have done. They furnish an indispensable supplement to the external and cursory delineations given in the Acts of the Apostles. While Luke skilfully presents the outward framework of Paul's life and the events of his public

career, it is to the Epistles that we turn—to none more frequently than this—for the necessary subjective data, for all that belongs to his inner character, his motives and principles. This Epistle brings into bold relief the Apostle's moral physiognomy. Above all, it throws a clear and penetrating light on the event which determined his career—the greatest event in the history of Christianity after the Day of Pentecost—Paul's conversion to faith in the Lord Jesus.

This was at once the turning-point in the Apostle's life, and the birth-hour of his gospel. If the Galatians were to understand his teaching, they must understand this occurrence; they must know why he became a Christian, how he had received the message which he brought to them. They would, he felt sure, enter more sympathetically into his doctrine, if they were better acquainted with the way in which he had arrived at it. They would see how well-justified was the authority, how needful the severity with which he writes. Accordingly he begins with a brief relation of the circumstances of his call to the service of Christ, and his career from the days of his Judaistic zeal, when he made havoc of the faith, till the well-known occasion on which he became its champion against Peter himself, the chief of the Twelve (ch. i. 11—ii. 21.) His object in this recital appears to be threefold: to refute the misrepresentations of the Circumcisionists; to vindicate his independent authority as an Apostle of Christ; and further, to unfold the nature and terms of his gospel, so as to pave the way for the theological argument which is to follow, and which forms the body of the Epistle.

I. *Paul's gospel was supernaturally conveyed to him, by a personal intervention of Jesus Christ.* This

assertion is the Apostle's starting-point. "My gospel is not after man. I received it as Jesus Christ revealed it to me."

That the initial revelation was made to him by Christ in person, was a fact of incalculable importance for Paul. This had made him an Apostle, in the august sense in which he claims the title (ver. 1). This accounts for the vehemence with which he defends his doctrine, and for the awful sentence which he has passed upon its impugners. The Divine authorship of the gospel he preached made it impossible for him to temporize with its perverters, or to be influenced by human favour or disfavour in its administration. Had his teaching been "according to man," he might have consented to a compromise; he might reasonably have tried to humour and accommodate Jewish prejudices. But the case is far otherwise. "I am not at liberty to please men," he says, "for my gospel comes directly from Jesus Christ" (vv. 10, 11). So he "gives" his readers "to know," as if by way of formal notification.*

The gospel of Paul was inviolable, then, because of its superhuman character. And this character was impressed upon it by its superhuman origin: "not according to man, for neither *from man* did I receive it, nor was I taught it, but by a revelation of Jesus Christ." The Apostle's knowledge of Christianity did not come through the ordinary channel of tradition and indoctrination; Jesus Christ had, by a miraculous interposition, taught him the truth about Himself. He says, "Neither did *I*," with an emphasis that points tacitly to the elder Apostles, whom he mentions a few

* Comp. Rom. ix. 22; 1 Cor. xii. 3; xv. 1; 2 Cor. viii. 1.

sentences later (ver. 17). To this comparison his adversaries forced him, making use of it as they freely did to his disparagement.* But it comes in by implication rather than direct assertion. Only by putting violence upon himself, and with strong expressions of his unworthiness, can Paul be brought to set his official claims in competition with those of the Twelve. Notwithstanding, it is perfectly clear that he puts his ministry on a level with theirs. He is no Apostle at second-hand, no disciple of Peter's or dependant of the "pillars" at Jerusalem. "Neither did I," he declares, "any more than they, take my instructions from other lips than those of Jesus our Lord."

But what of this "revelation of Jesus Christ," on which Paul lays so much stress? Does he mean a revelation made *by* Christ, or *about* Christ? Taken by itself, the expression, in Greek as in English, bears either interpretation. In favour of the second construction—viz. that Paul speaks of a revelation by which Christ was made known to him—the language of ver. 16 is adduced: "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." Paul's general usage points in the same direction. With him Christ is the *object* of manifestation, preaching, and the like. 2 Cor. xii. 1 is probably an instance to the contrary: "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord." † But it should be observed that wherever this genitive is objective (a revelation revealing Christ), *God* appears in the context, just as in ver. 16 below, to Whom the authorship of the revelation is ascribed. In this instance, *the*

* See ch. ii. 6—14; 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 22; iv. 9; ix. 1—5; xv. 8—10.

† This genitive is, however, open to the other construction, which is unquestionable in 1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. i. 7; also 1 Pet. i. 7, 13. Rev. i. 1 furnishes a prominent example of the *subjective* genitive.

gospel is the object revealed; and *Jesus Christ*, in contrast with man, is claimed for its Author. So at the outset (ver. 1) Christ, in His Divine character, was the *Agent* by whom Paul, as veritably as the Twelve, had received his Apostleship. We therefore assent to the ordinary view, reading this passage in the light of the vision of Jesus thrice related in the Acts.* We understand Paul to say that no *mere man* imparted to him the gospel he preached, but *Jesus Christ revealed it.*

On the Damascus road the Apostle Paul found his mission. The vision of the glorified Jesus made him a Christian, and an Apostle. The act was a *revelation*—that is, in New Testament phrase, a supernatural, an immediately Divine communication of truth. And it was a revelation not conveyed in the first instance, as were the ordinary prophetic inspirations, through the Spirit; "Jesus Christ," in His Divine-human person, made Himself known to His persecutor. Paul had "seen that Just One and heard a voice from His mouth."

The appearance of Jesus to Saul of Tarsus was in itself a gospel, an earnest of the good tidings he was to convey to the world. "Why persecutest thou Me?" that Divine voice said, in tones of reproach, yet of infinite pity. The sight of Jesus the Lord, meeting Saul's eyes, revealed His grace and truth to the persecutor's heart. He was brought in a moment to the obedience of faith; he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He "confessed with his mouth the Lord Jesus"; he "believed in his heart that God had raised Him from the dead." It was true, after all, that "God had made" the crucified Nazarene "both Lord and Christ;" for this was He!

* Acts ix. 1—19; xxii. 5—16; xxvi. 12—18.

The cross, which had been Saul's stumbling-block, deeply affronting his Jewish pride, from this moment was transformed. The glory of the exalted Redeemer cast back its light upon the tree of shame. The curse of the Law visibly resting upon Him, the rejection of men, marked Him out as God's chosen sacrifice for sin. This explanation at once presented itself to an instructed and keenly theological mind like Saul's, so soon as it was evident that Jesus was not accursed, as he had supposed, but approved by God. So Paul's gospel was given him at a stroke. Jesus Christ dying for our sins, Jesus Christ living to save and to rule—behold "the good news"! The Apostle had it on no less authority than that of the risen Saviour. From Him he received it to publish wide as the world.

Thus Saul of Tarsus was born again. And with the Christian man, the Christian thinker, the theologian, was born in him. The Pauline doctrine has its root in Paul's conversion. It was a single, organic growth, the seed of which was this "revelation of Jesus Christ." Its creative impulse was given in the experience of the memorable hour, when "God who said, Light shall shine out of darkness, in the face of Jesus Christ shined" into Saul's heart. As the light of this revelation penetrated his spirit, he recognised, step by step, the fact of the resurrection, the import of the crucifixion, the Divinity of Jesus, His human mediatorship, the virtue of faith, the office of the Holy Spirit, the futility of Jewish ritual and works of law, and all the essential principles of his theology. Given the genius of Saul and his religious training, and the Pauline system of doctrine was, one might almost say, *a necessary deduction* from the fact of the appearance to him of the glorified Jesus. If that form of celestial splendour was Jesus,

then He was risen indeed; then He was the Christ; He was, as He affirmed, the Son of God. If He was Lord and Christ, and yet died by the Father's will on the cross of shame, then His death could only be a propitiation, accepted by God, for the sins of men, whose efficacy had no limit, and whose merit left no room for legal works of righteousness. If this Jesus was the Christ, then the assumptions of Saul's Judaism, which had led him into blasphemous hatred and outrage towards Him, were radically false; he will purge himself from the "old leaven," that his life may become "a new lump." From that moment a world of life and thought began for the future Apostle, the opposite in all respects of that in which hitherto he had moved. "The old things," he cries, "passed away; lo, they have become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). Paul's conversion was as complete as it was sudden.

This intimate relation of doctrine and experience gives to Paul's teaching a peculiar warmth and freshness, a vividness of human reality which it everywhere retains, despite its lofty intellectualism and the scholastic form in which it is largely cast. It is theology alive, trembling with emotion, speaking words like flames, forming dogmas hard as rock, that when you touch them are yet glowing with the heat of those central depths of the human spirit from which they were cast up. The collision of the two great Apostles at Antioch shows how the strength of Paul's teaching lay in his inward realization of the truth. There was *life* behind his doctrine. He was, and for the time the Jewish Apostle was not, acting and speaking out of the reality of spiritual conviction, of truth personally verified. Of the Apostle Paul above all divines the saying is true, *Pectus facit theologum.* And this personal knowledge

of Christ, "the master light of all his seeing," began when on the way to Damascus his eyes beheld Jesus our Lord. His farewell charge to the Church through Timothy (2 Tim. i. 9—12), while referring to the general manifestation of Christ to the world, does so in language coloured by the recollection of the peculiar revelation made at the beginning to himself: "God," he says, "called us with a holy calling, according to His purpose and grace, which hath now been manifested by the appearing * of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light † through the gospel, whereunto *I* was appointed a preacher and apostle. For which cause I also suffer these things. But I am not ashamed: for I *know* Him in whom I have believed." This manifestation of the celestial Christ shed its brightness along all his path.

II. His assertion of the Divine origin of his doctrine Paul sustains by referring to *the previous course of his life*. There was certainly nothing in that to account for his preaching Christ crucified. "For you have heard," he continues, "of my manner of life aforetime, when I followed Judaism."

Here ends the chain of *fors* reaching from ver. 10 to 13 —a succession of explanations linking Paul's denunciation of the Christian Judaizers to the fact that he had himself been a violent anti-Christian Judaist. The seeming contradiction is in reality a consistent sequence. Only one who had imbibed the spirit of legalism as Saul of Tarsus had done, could justly appreciate the hostility of its principles to the new faith, and the sinister motives actuating the men who pretended to

* Ἐπιφανεία, a supernatural appearance, such as that of the Second Advent.

† Φωτίζω, comp. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

reconcile them. Paul knew Judaism by heart. He understood the sort of men who opposed him in the Gentile Churches. And if his anathema appear needlessly severe, we must remember that no one was so well able to judge of the necessities of the case as the man who pronounced it.

"You have heard"—from whom? In the first instance, probably, from Paul himself. But on this matter, we may be pretty sure, his opponents would have something to say. They did not scruple to assert that he "still preached circumcision" * and played the Jew even now when it suited him, charging him with insincerity. Or they might say, "Paul is a renegade. Once the most ardent of zealots for Judaism, he has passed to the opposite extreme. He is a man you cannot trust. Apostates are proverbially bitter against their old faith." In these and in other ways Paul's Pharisaic career was doubtless thrown in his teeth.

The Apostle sorrowfully confesses "that above measure he persecuted the Church of God and laid it waste." His friend Luke makes the same admission in similar language.† There is no attempt to conceal or palliate this painful fact, that the famous Apostle of the Gentiles had been a persecutor, the deadliest enemy of the Church in its infant days. He was the very type of a determined, pitiless oppressor, the forerunner of the Jewish fanatics who afterwards sought his life, and of the cruel bigots of the Inquisition and the Star-chamber in later times. His restless energy, his indifference to the feelings of humanity in this work of destruction, were due to religious zeal. "I thought,"

* Ch. v. 11; comp. 1 Cor. ix. 20; Acts xvi. 3; xxi. 20—26; xxiii. 6.
† Acts vii. 58; viii. 1—3; ix. 1.

he says, "I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." In him, as in so many others, the saying of Christ was fulfilled: "The time cometh, when whoso killeth you will think that he is offering a sacrifice to God." These Nazarenes were heretics, traitors to Israel, enemies of God. Their leader had been crucified, branded with the extremest mark of Divine displeasure. His followers must perish. Their success meant the ruin of Mosaism. God willed their destruction. Such were Saul's thoughts, until he heard the protesting voice of Jesus as he approached Damascus to ravage His little flock. No wonder that he suffered remorse to the end of his days.

Saul's persecution of the Church was the natural result of his earlier training, of the course to which in his youth he committed himself. The Galatians had heard also "how proficient he was in Judaism, beyond many of his kindred and age; that he was surpassed by none in zeal for their ancestral traditions." His birth (Phil. iii. 4, 5), education (Acts xxii. 3), temperament, circumstances, all combined to make him a zealot of the first water, the pink and pattern of Jewish orthodoxy, the rising hope of the Pharisaic party, and an instrument admirably fitted to crush the hated and dangerous sect of the Nazarenes. These facts go to prove, not that Paul is a traitor to his own people, still less that he is a Pharisee at heart, preaching Gentile liberty from interested motives; but that it must have been some extraordinary occurrence, quite out of the common run of human influences and probabilities, that set him on his present course. What could have turned this furious Jewish persecutor all at once into the champion of the cross? What indeed but the revelation of Christ which he received at the Damascus

gate? His previous career up to that hour had been such as to make it impossible that he should have received his gospel through human means. The chasm between his Christian and pre-Christian life had only been bridged by a supernatural interposition of the mercy of Christ.

Our modern critics, however, think that they know Paul better than he knew himself. They hold that the problem raised by this passage is capable of a natural solution. Psychological analysis, we are told, sets the matter in a different light. Saul of Tarsus had a tender conscience. Underneath his fevered and ambitious zeal, there lay in the young persecutor's heart a profound misgiving, a mortifying sense of his failure, and the failure of his people, to attain the righteousness of the Law. The seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans is a leaf taken out of the inner history of this period of the Apostle's life. Through what a stern discipline the Tarsian youth had passed in these legal years! How his haughty spirit chafed and tortured itself under the growing consciousness of its moral impotence! The Law had been truly his παιδαγωγός (ch. iii. 24), a severe tutor, preparing him unconsciously "for Christ." In this state of mind such scenes as the martyrdom of Stephen could not but powerfully affect Saul, in spite of himself. The bearing of the persecuted Nazarenes, the words of peace and forgiveness that they uttered under their sufferings, stirred questionings in his breast not always to be silenced. Self-distrust and remorse were secretly undermining the rigour of his Judaic faith. They acted like a "goad" (Acts xxvi. 14), against which he "kicked in vain." He rode to Damascus—a long and lonely journey—in a state of increasing dis-

quiet and mental conflict. The heat and exhaustion of the desert march, acting on a nervous temperament naturally excitable and overwrought, hastened the crisis. Saul fell from his horse in an access of fever, or catalepsy. His brain was on fire. The convictions that haunted him suddenly took form and voice in the apparition of the glorified Jesus, whom Stephen in his dying moments had addressed. From that figure seemed to proceed the reproachful cry which the persecutor's conscience had in vain been striving to make him hear. A flash of lightning, or, if you like, a sunstroke, is readily imagined to fire this train of circumstances,—and the explanation is complete! When, besides, M. Renan is good enough to tell us that he has himself "experienced an attack of this kind at Byblos," and "with other principles would certainly have taken the hallucinations he then had for visions,"* what more can we desire? Nay, does not Paul himself admit, in ver. 16 of this chapter, that his conversion was essentially a spiritual and subjective event?

Such is the diagnosis of Paul's conversion offered us by rationalism; and it is not wanting in boldness nor in skill. But the corner-stone on which it rests, the hinge of the whole theory, is imaginary and in fatal contradiction with the facts of the case. Paul himself *knows nothing* of the remorse imputed to him previously to the vision of Jesus. The historian of the Acts knows nothing of it. In a nature so upright and conscientious as that of Saul, this misgiving would at least have induced him to desist from persecution. From first to last his testimony is, "I did it *ignorantly*, in unbelief." It was this ignorance, this absence of any sense of

* *Les Apôtres*, p. 180, note 1.

wrong in the violence he used against the followers of Jesus, that, in his view, accounted for his "obtaining mercy" (1 Tim. i. 13). If impressions of an opposite kind were previously struggling in his mind, with such force that on a mere nervous shock they were ready to precipitate themselves in the shape of an overmastering hallucination, changing instantly and for ever the current of his life, how comes it that the Apostle has told us nothing about them? That he should have *forgotten* impressions so poignant and so powerful, is inconceivable. And if he has of set purpose ignored, nay, virtually denied this all-important fact, what becomes of his sincerity?

The Apostle was manifestly innocent of any such predisposition to Christian faith as the above theory imputes to him. True, he was conscious in those Judaistic days of his failure to attain righteousness, of the disharmony existing between "the law of his reason" and that which wrought "in his members." His conviction of sin supplied the moral precondition necessary in every case to saving faith in Christ. But this negative condition does not help us in the least to explain the vision of the glorified Jesus. By no psychological process whatever could the experience of Rom. vii. 7—24 be made to project itself in such an apparition. With all his mysticism and emotional susceptibility, Paul's mind was essentially sane and critical. To call him *epileptic* is a calumny. No man so diseased could have gone through the Apostle's labours, or written these Epistles. His discussion of the subject of supernatural gifts, in 1 Cor. xii. and xiv., is a model of shrewdness and good sense. He had experience of trances and ecstatic visions; and he knew, perhaps as well as M. Renan, how to distinguish them

from objective realities.* The manner in which he speaks of this appearance allows of no reasonable doubt as to the Apostle's full persuasion that "in sober certainty of waking sense" he had seen Jesus our Lord.

It was this sensible and outward revelation that led to the inward revelation of the Redeemer to his soul, of which Paul goes on to speak in ver. 16. Without the latter the former would have been purposeless and useless. The objective vision could only have revealed a "Christ after the flesh," had it not been the means of opening Saul's closed heart to the influence of the Spirit of Christ. It was the means to this, and in the given circumstances the indispensable means.

To a history that "knows no miracles," the Apostle Paul must remain an enigma. His faith in the crucified Jesus is equally baffling to naturalism with that of the first disciples, who had laid Him in the grave. When the Apostle argues that his antecedent relations to Christianity were such as to preclude his conversion having come about by natural human means, we are bound to admit both the sincerity and the conclusiveness of his appeal.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 18; 2 Cor. xii. 1—6; Acts xvi. 9; xviii. 8, 9; xxii. 17, 18.

CHAPTER V.

PAUL'S DIVINE COMMISSION.

"But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, *even* from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus."—GAL. i. 15—17.

IT pleased God to reveal His Son in me: this is after all the essential matter in Paul's conversion, as in that of every Christian. The outward manifestation of Jesus Christ served in his case to bring about this result, and was necessary to qualify him for his extraordinary vocation. But of itself the supernatural vision had no redeeming virtue, and gave Saul of Tarsus no message of salvation for the world. Its glory blinded and prostrated the persecutor; his heart might notwithstanding have remained rebellious and unchanged. "I am Jesus," said the heavenly Form,—"Go, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do";—that was all! And that was not salvation. "Even though one rose from the dead," still it is possible not to believe. And faith is possible in its highest degree, and is exercised to-day by multitudes, with no celestial light to illumine, no audible voice from beyond the grave to awaken. The sixteenth verse gives us the inward counterpart of that exterior revelation in which

Paul's knowledge of Christ had its beginning,—but only its beginning.

The Apostle does not surely mean by "in me," *in my case, through me* (*to others*). This gives a sense true in itself, and expressed by Paul elsewhere (ver. 24; 1 Tim. i. 16), but unsuitable to the word "reveal," and out of place at this point of the narrative. In the next clause—"that I might preach Him among the Gentiles"—we learn what was to be the issue of this revelation for the world. But in the first place it was a Divine certainty *within the breast of Paul himself.* His Gentile Apostleship rested upon the most assured basis of inward conviction, upon a spiritual apprehension of the Redeemer's person. He says, laying emphasis on the last two words, "to reveal His Son *within me.*" So Chrysostom: Why did he not say *to me*, but *in me?* Showing that not by words alone he learned the things concerning faith; but that he was also filled with the abundance of the Spirit, the revelation shining through his very soul; and that he had Christ speaking in himself.

I. *The substance of Paul's gospel was, therefore, given him by the unveiling of the Redeemer to his heart.*

The "revelation" of ver. 16 takes up and completes that of ver. 12. The dazzling appearance of Christ before his eyes and the summons of His voice addressed to Saul's bodily ears formed the special mode in which it pleased God to "call him by His grace." But "whom He called, He also justified." In this further act of grace salvation is first personally realised, and the gospel becomes the man's individual possession. This experience ensued upon the acceptance of the fact that the crucified Jesus was the Christ. But this was by no means all. As the revelation penetrated further into the Apostle's soul, he began to apprehend its

deeper significance. He knew already that the Nazarene had claimed to be the Son of God, and on that ground had been sentenced to death by the Sanhedrim. His resurrection, now a demonstrated fact, showed that this awful claim, instead of being condemned, was acknowledged by God Himself. The celestial majesty in which He appeared, the sublime authority with which He spoke, witnessed to His Divinity. To Paul equally with the first Apostles, He "was declared Son of God in power, by the resurrection of the dead." But this persuasion was borne in upon him in his after reflections, and could not be adequately realised in the first shock of his great discovery. The language of this verse throws no sort of suspicion on the reality of the vision before Damascus. Quite the opposite. The inward presupposes the outward. Understanding follows sight. The subjective illumination, the inward conviction of Christ's Divinity, in Paul's case as in that of the first disciples, was brought about by the appearance of the risen, Divine Jesus. That appearance furnishes in both instances the explanation of the astounding change that took place in the men. The heart full of blasphemy against His name has learnt to own Him as "the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Through the bodily eyes of Saul of Tarsus the revelation of Jesus Christ had entered and transformed his spirit.

Of this interior revelation *the Holy Spirit*, according to the Apostle's doctrine, had been the organ. The Lord on first meeting the gathered Apostles after His resurrection "breathed upon them, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John xx. 22). This influence was in truth "the power of His resurrection"; it was the inspiring breath of the new life of humanity issuing

from the open grave of Christ. The baptism of Pentecost, with its "mighty rushing wind," was but the fuller effusion of the power whose earnest the Church received in that gentle breathing of peace on the day of the resurrection. By His Spirit Christ made Himself a dwelling in the hearts of His disciples, raised at last to a true apprehension of His nature. All this was recapitulated in the experience of Paul. In his case the common experience was the more sharply defined because of the suddenness of his conversion, and the startling effect with which this new consciousness projected itself upon the background of his earlier Pharisaic life. Paul had his Resurrection-vision on the road to Damascus. He received his Pentecostal baptism in the days that followed.

It is not necessary to fix the precise occasion of the second revelation, or to connect it specifically with the visit of Ananias to Saul in Damascus, much less with his later "ecstasy" in the temple (Acts ix. 10—19; xxii. 12—21). When Ananias, sent by Christ, brought him the assurance of forgiveness from the injured Church, and bade him "recover his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost," this message greatly comforted his heart, and pointed out to him more clearly the way of salvation along which he was groping. But it is the office of the Spirit of God to reveal the Son of God; so Paul teaches everywhere in his Epistles, taught first by his own experience. Not from Ananias, nor from any man had he received this knowledge; *God* revealed His Son in the soul of the Apostle—"sent forth the Spirit of His Son into his heart" (ch. iv. 6). The language of 2 Cor. iii. 12—iv. 6 is the best commentary on this verse. A veil rested on the heart of Saul the Pharisee. He read the Old

Covenant only in the condemning letter. Not yet did he know "the Lord" who is "the spirit." This veil was done away in Christ. "The glory of the Lord" that burst upon him in his Damascus journey, rent it once and for ever from his eyes. God, the Light-giver, had "shined in his heart, in the face of Jesus Christ." Such was the further scope of the revelation which effected Paul's conversion. As he writes afterwards to Ephesus, "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, had given him a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; eyes of the heart enlightened to know the hope of His calling, and His exceeding power to usward, according to that He wrought in Christ when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand" (Eph. i. 17—21). In these words we hear an echo of the thoughts that passed through the Apostle's mind when first "it pleased God in him to reveal His Son."

II. *In the light of this inner revelation Paul received his Gentile mission.*

He speedily perceived that this was the purpose with which the revelation was made: "that I should preach Him among the Gentiles." The three accounts of his conversion furnished by the Acts witness to the same effect. Whether we should suppose that the Lord Jesus gave Saul this commission directly, at His first appearance, as seems to be implied in Acts xxvi., or infer from the more detailed narrative of chapters ix. and xxii., that the announcement was sent by Ananias and afterwards more urgently repeated in the vision at the Temple, in either case the fact remains the same; from the beginning Paul knew that he was appointed to be Christ's witness to the Gentiles. This destination was included in the Divine call which

brought him to faith in Jesus. His Judaic prejudices were swept away. He was ready to embrace the universalism of the Gospel. With his fine logical instinct, sharpened by hatred, he had while yet a Pharisee discerned more clearly than many Jewish Christians the bearing of the doctrine of the cross upon the legal system. He saw that the struggle was one of life and death. The vehemence with which he flung himself into the contest was due to this perception. But it followed from this, that, once convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus, Paul's faith at a bound overleaped all Jewish barriers. "Judaism—or the religion of the Crucified," was the alternative with which his stern logic pursued the Nazarenes. Judaism *and* Christianity—this was a compromise intolerable to his nature. Before Saul's conversion he had left that halting-place behind; he apprehended already, in some sense, the truth up to which the elder Apostles had to be educated, that "in Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew." He passed at a step from the one camp to the other. In this there was consistency. The enlightened, conscientious persecutor, who had debated with Stephen and helped to stone him, was sure, if he became a Christian, to become a Christian of Stephen's school. When he entered the Church, Paul left the Synagogue. He was ripe for his world-wide commission. There was no surprise, no unpreparedness in his mind when the charge was given him, "Go; for I will send thee far hence among the Gentiles."

In the Apostle's view, his personal salvation and that of the race were objects united from the first. Not as a privileged Jew, but as a sinful man, the Divine grace had found him out. The righteousness of God was revealed to him on terms which brought it within

the reach of every human being. The Son of God whom he now beheld was a personage vastly greater than his national Messiah, the "Christ after the flesh" of his Jewish dreams, and His gospel was correspondingly loftier and larger in its scope. "God was in Christ, reconciling," not a nation, but "*a world* unto Himself." The "grace" conferred on him was given that he might "preach among the Gentiles Christ's unsearchable riches, and make all men see the mystery" of the counsel of redeeming love (Eph. iii. 1—11). It was the world's redemption of which Paul partook; and it was his business to let the world know it. He had fathomed the depths of sin and self-despair; he had tasted the uttermost of pardoning grace. God and the world met in his single soul, and were reconciled. He felt from the first what he expresses in his latest Epistles, that "the grace of God which appeared" to him, was "for the salvation of all men" (Tit. ii. 11). "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15). The same revelation that made Paul a Christian, made him the Apostle of mankind.

III. *For this vocation the Apostle had been destined by God from the beginning.* "It pleased God to do this," he says, "who had marked me out from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace."

While "Saul was yet breathing out threatening and slaughter" against the disciples of Jesus, how different a future was being prepared for him! How little can we forecast the issue of our own plans, or of those we form for others. His Hebrew birth, his rabbinical proficiency, the thoroughness with which he had mastered the tenets of Legalism, had fitted him like no

other to be the bearer of the Gospel to the Gentiles. This Epistle proves the fact. Only a graduate of the best Jewish schools could have written it. Paul's master, Gamaliel, if he had read the letter, must perforce have been proud of his scholar; he would have feared more than ever that those who opposed the Nazarene might "haply be found fighting against God." The Apostle foils the Judaists with their own weapons. He knows every inch of the ground on which the battle is waged. At the same time, he was a born Hellenist and a citizen of the Empire, native "of no mean city." Tarsus, his birthplace, was the capital of an important Roman province, and a centre of Greek culture and refinement. In spite of the Hebraic conservatism of Saul's family, the genial atmosphere of such a town could not but affect the early development of so sensitive a nature. He had sufficient tincture of Greek letters and conversance with Roman law to make him a true cosmopolitan, qualified to be "all things to all men." He presents an admirable example of that versatility and suppleness of genius which have distinguished for so many ages the sons of Jacob, and enable them to find a home and a market for their talents in every quarter of the world. Paul was "a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Jesus before Gentiles and kings, and the sons of Israel."

But his mission was concealed till the appointed hour. Thinking of his personal election, he reminds himself of the words spoken to Jeremiah touching his prophetic call. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee. I appointed thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. i. 5). Or like the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah he might say, "The Lord hath called me

from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name. And He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of His hand hath He hid me; and He hath made me a polished shaft, in His quiver hath He kept me close" (Isa. xlix. 1, 2). This belief in a fore-ordaining Providence, preparing in secret its chosen instruments, so deeply rooted in the Old Testament faith, was not wanting to Paul. His career is a signal illustration of its truth. He applies it, in his doctrine of Election, to the history of every child of grace. "Whom He foreknew, He did predestinate. Whom He did predestinate, He called." Once more we see how the Apostle's theology was moulded by his experience.

The manner in which Saul of Tarsus had been prepared all his life long for the service of Christ, magnified to his eyes the sovereign grace of God. "He called me *through His grace*." The call came at precisely the fit time; it came at a time and in a manner calculated to display the Divine compassion in the highest possible degree. This lesson Paul could never forget. To the last he dwells upon it with deep emotion. "In me," he writes to Timothy, "Jesus Christ first showed forth all His longsuffering. I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, insolent and injurious; but I obtained mercy" (1 Tim. i. 13—16). He was so dealt with from the beginning, he had been called to the knowledge of Christ under such circumstances that he felt he had a right to say, above other men, "By the grace of God I am what I am." The predestination under which his life was conducted "from his mother's womb," had for its chief purpose, to exhibit God's mercy to mankind, "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus"

(Eph. ii. 7). To this purpose, so soon as he discerned it, he humbly yielded himself. The Son of God, whose followers he had hunted to death, whom in his madness he would have crucified afresh, had appeared to him to save and to forgive. The *grace* of it, the infinite kindness and compassion such an act revealed in the Divine nature, excited new wonder in the Apostle's soul till his latest hour. Henceforth he was the bondman of grace, the celebrant of grace. His life was one act of thanksgiving "to the praise of the glory of His grace!"

IV. From Jesus Christ in person Paul had received his knowledge of the Gospel, without human intervention. In the revelation of Christ to his soul he possessed the substance of the truth he was afterwards to teach; and with the revelation there came the commission to proclaim it to all men. His gospel-message was in its essence complete; the Apostleship was already his. Such are the assertions the Apostle makes in reply to his gainsayers. And he goes on to show that *the course he took after his conversion sustains these lofty claims:* "When God had been pleased to reveal His Son in me, immediately (right from the first) I took no counsel with flesh and blood. I avoided repairing to Jerusalem, to the elder Apostles; I went away into Arabia, and back again to Damascus. It was three years before I set foot in Jerusalem."

If that were so, how could Paul have received his doctrine or his commission from the Church of Jerusalem, as his traducers alleged? He acted from the outset under the sense of a unique Divine call, that allowed of no human validation or supplement. Had the case been otherwise, had Paul come to his knowledge of Christ by ordinary channels, his first impulse

would have been to go up to the mother city to report himself there, and to gain further instruction. Above all, if he intended to be a minister of Christ, it would have been proper to secure the approval of the Twelve, and to be accredited from Jerusalem. This was the course which "flesh and blood" dictated, which Saul's new friends at Damascus probably urged upon him. It was insinuated that he had actually proceeded in this way, and put himself under the direction of Peter and the Judean Church. But he says, "I did nothing of the sort. I kept clear of Jerusalem for three years; and then I only went there to make private acquaintance with Peter, and stayed in the city but a fortnight." Although Paul did not for many years make public claim to rank with the Twelve, from the commencement he acted in conscious independence of them. He calls them "Apostles *before me*," by this phrase assuming the matter in dispute. He tacitly asserts his equality in official status with the Apostles of Jesus, assigning to the others precedence only in point of time. And he speaks of this equality in terms implying that it was already present to his mind at this former period. Under this conviction he held aloof from human guidance and approbation. Instead of "going up to Jerusalem," the centre of publicity, the head-quarters of the rising Church, Paul "went off into Arabia."

There were, no doubt, other reasons for this step. Why did he choose *Arabia* for his sojourn? and what, pray, was he doing there? The Apostle leaves us to our own conjectures. *Solitude*, we imagine, was his principal object. His Arabian retreat reminds us of the Arabian exile of Moses, of the wilderness discipline of John the Baptist, and the "forty days" of Jesus in the wilderness. In each of these instances, the desert retirement

followed upon a great inward crisis, and was preparatory to the entrance of the Lord's servant on his mission to the world. Elijah, at a later period of his course, sought the wilderness under motives not dissimilar. After such a convulsion as Paul had passed through, with a whole world of new ideas and emotions pouring in upon him, he felt that he must be alone; he must get away from the voices of men. There are such times in the history of every earnest soul. In the silence of the Arabian desert, wandering amid the grandest scenes of ancient revelation, and communing in stillness with God and with his own heart, the young Apostle will think out the questions that press upon him; he will be able to take a calmer survey of the new world into which he has been ushered, and will learn to see clearly and walk steadily in the heavenly light that at first bewildered him. So "the Spirit immediately driveth him out into the wilderness." In Arabia one confers, not with flesh and blood, but with the mountains and with God. From Arabia Saul returned in possession of himself, and of his gospel.

The Acts of the Apostles omits this Arabian episode (Acts ix. 19—25). But for what Paul tells us here, we should have gathered that he began at once after his baptism to preach Christ in Damascus, his preaching after no long time* exciting Jewish enmity to such a pitch that his life was imperilled, and the Christian brethren compelled him to seek safety by flight to Jerusalem. The reader of Luke is certainly surprised to find a period of three years,† with a prolonged

* ἡμέραι ἱκαναί, *a considerable time*. The expression is indefinite.

† Ver. 18: that is, parts of "three years," according to ancient reckoning—say from 36 to 38 A.D., possibly less than two in actual duration.

residence in Arabia, interpolated between Paul's conversion and his reception in Jerusalem. Luke's silence, we judge, is *intentional.* The Arabian retreat formed no part of the Apostle's public life, and had no place in the narrative of the Acts. Paul only mentions it here in the briefest terms, and because the reference was necessary to put his relations to the first Apostles in their proper light. For the time the converted Saul had dropped out of sight; and the historian of the Acts respects his privacy.

The place of the Arabian journey seems to us to lie between vv. 21 and 22 of Acts ix. That passage gives a twofold description of Paul's preaching in Damascus, in its earlier and later stages, with a double note of time (vv. 19 and 23). Saul's first testimony, taking place "straightway," was, one would presume, a mere declaration of faith in Jesus: "In the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, (saying) that He is the Son of God" (R.V.), language in striking harmony with that of the Apostle in the text (vv. 12, 16). Naturally this recantation caused extreme astonishment in Damascus, where Saul's reputation was well-known both to Jews and Christians, and his arrival was expected in the character of Jewish inquisitor-in-chief. Ver. 22 presents a different situation. Paul is now preaching in his established and characteristic style; as we read it, we might fancy we hear him debating in the synagogues of Pisidian Antioch or Corinth or Thessalonica: "He was confounding the Jews, *proving* that this is the Christ." Neither Saul himself nor his Jewish hearers in the first days after his conversion would be in the mood for the sustained argumentation and Scriptural dialectic thus described. The explanation of the change lies behind the opening words of the verse: "But Saul

increased in strength"—a growth due not only to the prolonged opposition he had to encounter, but still more, as we conjecture from this hint of the Apostle, to the period of rest and reflection which he enjoyed in his Arabian seclusion. The two marks of time given us in vv. 19 and 23 of Luke's narrative, may be fairly distinguished from each other—"certain days," and "sufficient days" (or "a considerable time")—as denoting a briefer and a longer season respectively: the former so short that the excitement caused by Saul's declaration of his new faith had not yet subsided when he withdrew from the city into the desert—in which case Luke's note of time does not really conflict with Paul's "immediately"; the latter affording a lapse of time sufficient for Saul to develope his argument for the Messiahship of Jesus, and to provoke the Jews, worsted in logic, to resort to other weapons. From Luke's point of view the sojourn in Arabia, however extended, was simply an incident, of no public importance, in Paul's early ministry in Damascus.

The disappearance of Saul during this interval helps however, as we think, to explain a subsequent statement in Luke's narrative that is certainly perplexing (Acts ix. 26, 27). When Saul, after his escape from Damascus, "was come to Jerusalem," and "essayed to join himself to the disciples," they, we are told, "were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple!" For while the Church at Jerusalem had doubtless heard at the time of Saul's marvellous conversion three years before, his long retirement and avoidance of Jerusalem threw an air of mystery and suspicion about his proceedings, and revived the fears of the Judean brethren; and his reappearance created a panic. In consequence of his sudden departure from Damascus, it is likely that

no public report had as yet reached Judæa of Saul's return to that city and his renewed ministry there. Barnabas now came forward to act as sponsor for the suspected convert. What induced him to do this—whether it was that his largeness of heart enabled him to read Saul's character better than others, or whether he had some earlier private acquaintance with the Tarsian—we cannot tell. The account that Barnabas was able to give of his friend's conversion and of his bold confession in Damascus, won for Paul the place in the confidence of Peter and the leaders of the Church at Jerusalem which he never afterwards lost.

The two narratives—the history of Luke and the letter of Paul—relate the same series of events, but from almost opposite standpoints. Luke dwells upon *Paul's connection with the Church at Jerusalem and its Apostles.* Paul is maintaining *his independence of them.* There is no contradiction; but there is just such discrepancy as will arise where two honest and competent witnesses are relating identical facts in a different connection.

CHAPTER VI.

PAUL AND THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

"The nafter three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, but only James the Lord's brother. Now touching the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ: but they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havock; and they glorified God in me."—GAL. i. 18—24.

FOR the first two years of his Christian life, Paul held no intercourse whatever with the Church at Jerusalem and its chiefs. His relation with them was commenced by the visit he paid to Peter in the third year after his conversion. And that relation was more precisely determined and made public when, after successfully prosecuting for fourteen years his mission to the heathen, the Apostle again went up to Jerusalem to defend the liberty of the Gentile Church (ch. ii. 1—10).

A clear understanding of this course of events was essential to the vindication of Paul's position in the eyes of the Galatians. The "troublers" told them that Paul's doctrine was not that of the mother Church; that his knowledge of the gospel and authority to preach it came from the elder Apostles, with whom since his attack upon Peter at Antioch he was at open variance. They themselves had come down from Judæa on purpose to set his pretensions in their true

light, and to teach the Gentiles the way of the Lord more perfectly.

Modern rationalism has espoused the cause of these "deceitful workers" (2 Cor. xi. 13—15). It endeavours to rehabilitate the Judaistic party. The "critical" school maintain that the opposition of the Circumcisionists to the Apostle Paul was perfectly legitimate. They hold that the "pseud-apostles" of Corinth, the "certain from James," the "troublers" and "false brethren privily brought in" of this Epistle, did in truth represent, as they claimed to do, the principles of the Jewish Christian Church; and that there was a radical divergence between the Pauline and Petrine gospels, of which the two Apostles were fully aware from the time of their encounter at Antioch. However Paul may have wished to disguise the fact to himself, the teaching of the Twelve was identical, we are told, with that "other gospel" on which he pronounces his anathema; the original Church of Jesus never emancipated itself from the trammels of legalism; the Apostle Paul, and not his Master, was in reality the author of evangelical doctrine, the founder of the catholic Church. The conflict between Peter and Paul at Antioch, related in this Epistle, supplies, in the view of Baur and his followers, the key to the history of the Early Church. The Ebionite assumption of a personal rivalry between the two Apostles and an intrinsic opposition in their doctrine, hitherto regarded as the invention of a desperate and decaying heretical sect, these ingenious critics have adopted for the basis of their "scientific" reconstruction of the New Testament. Paul's Judaizing hinderers and troublers are to be canonized; and the pseudo-Clementine writings, forsooth, must take the place of the discredited Acts of the Apostles. Verily

"the whirligig of time hath its revenges." To empanel Paul on his accusers' side, and to make this Epistle above all convict him of heterodoxy, is an attempt which dazzles by its very daring.

Let us endeavour to form a clear conception of the facts touching Paul's connection with the first Apostles and his attitude and feeling towards the Jewish Church, as they are in evidence in the first two chapters of this Epistle.

I. On the one hand, it is clear that the Gentile Apostle's relations to Peter and the Twelve were those of *personal independence and official equality.*

This is the aspect of the case on which Paul lays stress. His sceptical critics argue that under his assertion of independence there is concealed an opposition of principle, a "radical divergence." The sense of independence is unmistakable. It is on that side that the Apostle seeks to guard himself. With this aim he styles himself at the outset "an Apostle not from men, nor by man"—neither man-made nor man-sent. Such apostles there were; and in this character, we imagine, the Galatian Judaistic teachers, like those of Corinth,* professed to appear, as the emissaries of the Church in Jerusalem and the authorised exponents of the teaching of the "pillars" there. Paul is an Apostle at first-hand, taking his commission directly from Jesus Christ. In that quality he pronounces his benediction and his anathema. To support this assumption he has shown how impossible it was in point of time and circumstances that he should have been beholden for his gospel to the Jerusalem Church and the elder Apostles. So far as regarded the manner of his conversion and

* 2 Cor. xi. 13; iii. 1—3. See the remarks on the word *Apostle* in Chapter I. p. 12.

the events of the first decisive years in which his Christian principles and vocation took their shape, his position had been altogether detached and singular; the Jewish Apostles could in no way claim him for their son in the gospel.

But at last, "after three years," Saul "did go up to Jerusalem." What was it for? To report himself to the authorities of the Church and place himself under their direction? To seek Peter's instruction, in order to obtain a more assured knowledge of the gospel he had embraced? Nothing of the kind. Not even "*to question* Cephas," as some render ἱστορῆσαι, following an older classical usage—"to gain information" from him; but "I went up *to make acquaintance with* Cephas." Saul went to Jerusalem carrying in his heart the consciousness of his high vocation, seeking, as an equal with an equal, to make personal acquaintance with the leader of the Twelve. *Cephas* (as he was called at Jerusalem) must have been at this time to Paul a profoundly interesting personality. He was the one man above all others whom the Apostle felt he must get to know, with whom it was necessary for him to have a thorough understanding.

How momentous was this meeting! How much we could wish to know what passed between these two in the conversations of the fortnight they spent together. One can imagine the delight with which Peter would relate to his listener the scenes of the life of Jesus; how the two men would weep together at the recital of the Passion, the betrayal, trial and denial, the agony of the Garden, the horror of the cross; with what mingled awe and triumph he would describe the events of the Resurrection and the Forty Days, the Ascension, and the baptism of fire. In Paul's account of the appear-

ances of the risen Christ (1 Cor. xv. 4—8), written many years afterwards, there are statements most naturally explained as a recollection of what he had heard privately from Peter, and possibly also from James, at this conference. For it is in his gospel message and doctrine, and his Apostolic commission, not in regard to the details of the biography of Jesus, that Paul claims to be independent of tradition. And with what deep emotion would Peter receive in turn from Paul's lips the account of his meeting with Jesus, of the three dark days that followed, of the message sent through Ananias, and the revelations made and purposes formed during the Arabian exile. Between two such men, met at such a time, there would surely be an entire frankness of communication and a brotherly exchange of convictions and of plans. In that case Paul could not fail to inform the elder Apostle of the extent of the commission he had received from their common Master; although he does not appear to have made any public and formal assertion of his Apostolic dignity for a considerable time afterwards. The supposition of a private cognizance on Peter's part of Paul's true status makes the open recognition which took place fourteen years later easy to understand (ch. ii. 6—10).

"But other of the Apostles," Paul goes on to say, "saw I none, but only James the brother of the Lord.' James, *no Apostle* surely; neither in the higher sense, for he cannot be reasonably identified with "James the son of Alphæus;" nor in the lower, for he was, as far as we can learn, stationary at Jerusalem. But he stood so near the Apostles, and was in every way so important a person, that if Paul had omitted the name of James in this connection, he would have seemed to pass

over a material fact. The reference to James in 1 Cor. xv. 7—a hint deeply interesting in itself, and lending so much dignity to the position of James—suggests that Paul had been at this time in confidential intercourse with James as well as Peter, each relating to the other how he had "seen the Lord."

So cardinal are the facts just stated (vv. 15—19), as bearing on Paul's apostleship, and so contrary to the representations made by the Judaizers, that he pauses to call God to witness his veracity: "Now in what I am writing to you, lo, before God, I lie not." The Apostle never makes this appeal lightly; but only in support of some averment in which his personal honour and his strongest feelings are involved.* It was alleged, with some show of proof, that Paul was an underling of the authorities of the Church at Jerusalem, and that all he knew of the gospel had been learned from the Twelve. From ver. 11 onwards he has been making a circumstantial contradiction of these assertions. He protests that up to the time when he commenced his Gentile mission, he had been under no man's tutelage or tuition in respect to his knowledge of the gospel. He can say no more to prove his case. Either his opposers or himself are uttering falsehood. The Galatians know, or ought to know, how incapable he is of such deceit. Solemnly therefore he avouches, closing the matter so far, as if drawing himself up to his utmost height: "Behold, before God, I do not lie!"

But now we are confronted with the narrative of the Acts (chap. ix. 26—30), which renders a very different account of this passage in the Apostle's life.

* See Rom. ix. 1; 2 Cor. i. 17, 18, 23; 1 Thess. ii. 5.

(To vv. 26, 27 of Luke's narrative we have already alluded in the concluding paragraphs of Chapter V). We are told there that Barnabas introduced Saul "to the Apostles"; here, that he saw none of them but Cephas, and only James besides. The *number* of the Apostolate present in Jerusalem at the time is a particular that does not engage Luke's mind; while it is of the essence of Paul's affirmation. What the Acts relates is that Saul, through Barnabas' intervention, was now received by the Apostolic fellowship as a Christian brother, and as one who "had seen the Lord." The object which Saul had in coming to Jerusalem, and the fact that just then Cephas was the only one of the Twelve to be found in the city, along with James—these are matters which only come into view from the private and personal standpoint to which Paul admits us. For the rest, there is certainly no contradiction when we read in the one report that Paul "went up to make acquaintance with Cephas," and in the other, that he "was with them going in and out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord;" that "he spake and disputed against the Hellenists," moving their anger so violently that his life was again in danger, and he had to be carried down to Cæsarea and shipped off to Tarsus. Saul was not the man to hide his head in Jerusalem. We can understand how greatly his spirit was stirred by his arrival there, and by the recollection of his last passage through the city gates. In these very synagogues of the Hellenists he had himself confronted Stephen; outside those walls he had assisted to stone the martyr. Paul's address delivered many years later to the Jewish mob that attempted his life in Jerusalem, shows how deeply these remembrances troubled his soul (Acts xxii.

17—22). And they would not suffer him now to be silent. He hoped that his testimony to Christ, delivered in the spot where he had been so notorious as a persecutor, would produce a softening effect on his old companions. It was sure to affect them powerfully, one way or the other. As the event proved, it did not take many words from Saul's lips to awaken against him the same fury that hurried Stephen to his death. A fortnight was time quite sufficient, under the circumstances, to make Jerusalem, as we say, too hot to hold Saul. Nor can we wonder, knowing his love for his kindred, that there needed a special command from heaven (Acts xxii. 21), joined to the friendly compulsion of the Church, to induce him to yield ground and quit the city. But he had accomplished something; he had "made acquaintance with Cephas."

This brief visit to the Holy City was a second crisis in Paul's career. He was now thrust forth upon his mission to the heathen. It was evident that he was not to look for success among his Jewish brethren. He lost no opportunity of appealing to them; but it was commonly with the same result as at Damascus and Jerusalem. Throughout life he carried with him this "great sorrow and unceasing pain of heart," that to his "kinsmen according to the flesh," for whose salvation he could consent to forfeit his own, his gospel was hid. In their eyes he was a traitor to Israel, and must count upon their enmity. Everything conspired to point in one direction: 'Depart," the Divine voice had said, "for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." And Paul obeyed. "I went," he relates here, "into the regions of Syria and Cilicia" (ver. 21).

To Tarsus, the Cilician capital, Saul voyaged from

Judæa. So we learn from Acts ix. 30. His native place had the first claim on the Apostle after Jerusalem, and afforded the best starting-point for his independent mission. Syria, however, precedes Cilicia in the text; it was the leading province of these two, in which Paul was occupied during the fourteen years ensuing, and became the seat of distinguished Churches. In Antioch, the Syrian capital, Christianity was already planted (Acts xi. 19—21). The close connection of the Churches of these provinces, and their predominantly Gentile character, are both evident from the letter addressed to them subsequently by the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 23, 24). Acts xv. 41 shows that a number of Christian societies owning Paul's authority were found at a later time in this region. And there was a highroad direct from Syro-Cilicia to Galatia, which Paul traversed in his second visit to the latter country (Acts xviii. 22, 23); so that the Galatians would doubtless be aware of the existence of these older Gentile Churches, and of their relation to Paul. He has no need to dwell on this first chapter of his missionary history. After but a fortnight's visit to Jerusalem, Paul went into these Gentile regions, and there for twice seven years—with what success was known to all—"preached the faith of which once he made havoc."

This period was divided into two parts. For five or six years the Apostle laboured alone; afterwards in conjunction with Barnabas, who invited his help at Antioch (Acts xi. 25, 26). Barnabas was Paul's senior, and had for some time held the leading position in the Church of Antioch; and Paul was personally indebted to this generous man (p. 82). He accepted the position of helper to Barnabas without any compromise of his

higher authority, as yet held in reserve. He accompanied Barnabas to Jerusalem in 44 (or 45) A.D., with the contribution made by the Syrian Church for the relief of the famine-stricken Judean brethren—a visit which Paul seems here to forget.* But the Church at Jerusalem was at that time undergoing a severe persecution; its leaders were either in prison or in flight. The two delegates can have done little more than convey the moneys entrusted to them, and that with the utmost secrecy. Possibly Paul on this occasion never set foot inside the city. In any case, the event had no bearing on the Apostle's present contention.

Between this journey and the really important visit to Jerusalem introduced in chap. ii. 1, Barnabas and Paul undertook, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit expressed through the Church of Antioch (Acts xiii. 1—4), the missionary expedition described in Acts xiii., xiv. Under the trials of this journey the ascendancy of the younger evangelist became patent to all. Paul was marked out in the eyes of the Gentiles as their born leader, the Apostle of heathen Christianity. He appears to have taken the chief part in the discussion with the Judaists respecting circumcision, which immediately ensued at Antioch; and was put at the head of the deputation sent up to Jerusalem concerning this question. This was a turning-point in the Apostle's history. It brought about the public recognition of his leadership in the Church. The seal of man was now to be set upon the secret election of God.

During this long period, the Apostle tells us, he "remained unknown by face to the Churches of Judæa."

* Acts xi. 27—30. It is significant that this ministration was sent "to the Elders."

Absent for so many years from the metropolis, after a fortnight's flying visit, spent in private intercourse with Peter and James, and in controversy in the Hellenistic synagogues where few Christians of the city would be likely to follow him,* Paul was a stranger to the bulk of the Judean disciples. But they watched his course, notwithstanding, with lively interest and with devout thanksgiving to God (vv. 22, 23). Throughout this first period of his ministry the Apostle acted in complete independence of the Jewish Church, making no report to its chiefs, nor seeking any direction from them. Accordingly, when afterwards he did go up to Jerusalem and laid before the authorities there his gospel to the heathen, they had nothing to add to it; they did not take upon themselves to give him any advice or injunction, beyond the wish that he and Barnabas should "remember the poor," as he was already forward to do (ch. ii. 1—10). Indeed the three famous Pillars of the Jewish Church at this time openly acknowledged Paul's equality with Peter in the Apostleship, and resigned to his direction the Gentile province. Finally at Antioch, the head-quarters of Gentile Christianity, when Peter compromised the truth of the gospel by yielding to Judaistic pressure, Paul had not hesitated publicly to reprove him (ch. ii. 11—21). He had been compelled in this way to carry the vindication of his gospel to the furthest lengths; and he had done this successfully. It is only when we reach the end of the second chapter that we discover how much the Apostle meant when he said, "My gospel is not according to man."

* For the ministry alluded to in Acts xxvi. 20 there were other, later opportunities, especially in the journey described in Acts xv. 3; see also Acts xxi. 15, 16.

If there was any man to whom as a Christian teacher he was bound to defer, any one who might be regarded as his official superior, it was the Apostle Peter. Yet against this very Cephas he had dared openly to measure himself. Had he been a disciple of the Jewish Apostle, a servant of the Jerusalem Church, how would this have been possible? Had he not possessed an authority derived immediately from Christ, how could he have stood out alone, against the prerogative of Peter, against the personal friendship and local influence of Barnabas, against the example of all his Jewish brethren? Nay, he was prepared to rebuke all the Apostles, and anathematize all the angels, rather than see Christ's gospel set at nought. For it was in his view "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, *committed to my trust!*" (1 Tim. i. 11).

II. But while Paul stoutly maintains his independence, he does this in such a way as to show that there was no hostility or personal rivalry between himself and the first Apostles. His relations to the Jewish Church were all the while those of *friendly acquaintance and brotherly recognition.*

That Nazarene sect which he had of old time persecuted, was "the Church of God" (ver. 13). To the end of his life this thought gave a poignancy to the Apostle's recollection of his early days. To "the Churches of Judæa"* he attaches the epithet *in Christ*, a phrase of peculiar depth of meaning with Paul, which he could never have conferred as matter of formal courtesy, nor by way of mere distinction between the Church and the Synagogue. From

Ver. 22. It is arbitrary in Meyer to exclude from this category the Church of Jerusalem.

Paul's lips this title is a guarantee of orthodoxy. It satisfies us that the "other gospel" of the Circumcisionists was very far from being the gospel of the Jewish Christian Church at large. Paul is careful to record the sympathy which the Judean brethren cherished for his missionary work in its earliest stages, although their knowledge of him was comparatively distant: "Only they continued to hear that our old persecutor is preaching the faith which once he sought to destroy. And in me they glorified God." Nor does he drop the smallest hint to show that the disposition of the Churches in the mother country toward himself, or his judgement respecting them, had undergone any change up to the time of his writing this Epistle.

He speaks of the elder Apostles in terms of unfeigned respect. In his reference in ch. ii. 11—21 to the error of Peter, there is great plainness of speech, but no bitterness. When the Apostle says that he "went up to Jerusalem to see Peter," and describes James as "the Lord's brother," and when he refers to both of them, along with John, as "those accounted to be pillars," can he mean anything but honour to these honoured men? To read into these expressions a covert jealousy and to suppose them written by way of disparagement, seems to us a strangely jaundiced and small-minded sort of criticism. The Apostle testifies that Peter held a Divine trust in the Gospel, and that God had "wrought for Peter" to this effect, as for himself. By claiming the testimony of the Pillars at Jerusalem to his vocation, he shows his profound respect for theirs. When the unfortunate difference arose between Peter and himself at Antioch, Paul is careful to show that the Jewish Apostle on that occasion was influenced by the circumstances of the

moment, and nevertheless remained true in his real convictions to the common gospel.

In view of these facts, it is impossible to believe, as the *Tendency* critics would have us do, that Paul when he wrote this letter was at feud with the Jewish Church. In that case, while he taxes Peter with "dissimulation" (ch. ii. 11-13), he is himself the real dissembler, and has carried his dissimulation to amazing lengths. If he is in this Epistle contending against the Primitive Church and its leaders, he has concealed his sentiments toward them with an art so crafty as to overreach itself. He has taught his readers to reverence those whom on this hypothesis he was most concerned to discredit. The terms under which he refers to Cephas and the Judean Churches would be just so many testimonies against himself, if their doctrine was the "other gospel" of the Galatian troublers, and if Paul and the Twelve were rivals for the suffrages of the Gentile Christians.

The one word which wears a colour of detraction is the parenthesis in ver. 6 of ch. ii.: "whatever aforetime* they (those of repute) were, makes no difference to me. God accepts no man's person." But this is no more than Paul has already said in ch. i. 16, 17. At the first, after receiving his gospel from the Lord in person, he felt it to be out of place for him to "confer with flesh and blood." So now, even in the presence of the first Apostles, the earthly companions of his Master, he cannot abate his pretensions, nor forget that his ministry stands on a level as exalted as theirs. This language is in precise accord with that of 1 Cor. xv. 10. The suggestion that the repeated *οἱ δοκοῦντες*

* We follow Lightfoot in reading the *ποτὲ* as in ch. i. 23, and everywhere else in Paul, as a particle of *time*.

conveys a sneer against the leaders at Jerusalem, as "seeming" to be more than they were, is an insult to Paul that recoils upon the critics who utter it. The phrase denotes "those of repute," "reputed to be pillars," the acknowledged heads of the mother Church. Their position was recognised on all hands; Paul assumes it, and argues upon it. He desires to magnify, not to minify, the importance of these illustrious men. They were pillars of his own cause. It is a maladroit interpretation that would have Paul cry down James and the Twelve. By so much as he impaired their worth, he must assuredly have impaired his own. If their status was mere *seeming*, of what value was their endorsement of his? But for a preconceived opinion, no one, we may safely affirm, reading this Epistle would have gathered that Peter's "gospel of the circumcision" was the "other gospel" of Galatia, or that the "certain from James" of ch. ii. 12 represented the views and the policy of the first Apostles. The assumption that Peter's dissimulation at Antioch expressed the settled doctrine of the Jewish Apostolic Church, is unhistorical. The Judaizers *abused* the authority of Peter and James when they pleaded it in favour of their agitation. So we are told expressly in Acts xv.; and a candid interpretation of this letter bears out the statements of Luke. In James and Peter, Paul and John, there were indeed "diversities of gifts and operations," but they had received the same Spirit; they served the same Lord. They held alike the one and only gospel of the grace of God.

CHAPTER VII.

PAUL AND THE FALSE BRETHREN.

"Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me. And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately before them who were of repute, [*asking them* whether I am running, or had run, in vain: but not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But *it was* *] because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."—GAL. ii. 1—5.

"FOURTEEN years" had elapsed since Paul left Jerusalem for Tarsus, and commenced his Gentile mission.† During this long period—a full half of his missionary course—the Apostle was lost to the sight of the Judean Churches. For nearly half this time, until Barnabas brought him to Antioch, we have no further trace of his movements. But these years of obscure labour had, we may be sure, no small influence

* The writer is compelled in this instance to depart from the rendering of the English Version, for reasons given in the sequel. See also a paper on *Paul and Titus at Jerusalem*, in THE EXPOSITOR, 3rd series, vol. vi., pp. 435—442. The last three words within the brackets agree with the R.V. *margin*.

† These fourteen years probably amounted to something less in our reckoning.—say, from 38 to 51 A.D. Some six years elapsed before Paul was summoned to Antioch.

in shaping the Apostle's subsequent career. It was a kind of Apostolic apprenticeship. Then his evangelistic plans were laid; his powers were practised; his methods of teaching and administration formed and tested. This first, unnoted period of Paul's missionary life held, we imagine, much the same relation to his public ministry that the time of the Arabian retreat did to his spiritual development.

We are apt to think of the Apostle Paul only as we see him in the full tide of his activity, carrying "from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum" the standard of the cross and planting it in one after another of the great cities of the Empire, "always triumphing in every place;" or issuing those mighty Epistles whose voice shakes the world. We forget the earlier term of preparation, these years of silence and patience, of unrecorded toil in a comparatively narrow and humble sphere, which had after all their part in making Paul the man he was. If Christ Himself would not "clutch" at His Divine prerogatives (Phil. ii. 5—11), nor win them by self-assertion and before the time, how much more did it become His servant to rise to his great office by slow degrees. Paul served first as a private missionary pioneer in his native land, then as a junior colleague and assistant to Barnabas, until the summons came to take a higher place, when "the signs of an Apostle" had been fully "wrought in him." Not in a day, nor by the effect of a single revelation did he become the fully armed and all-accomplished Apostle of the Gentiles whom we meet in this Epistle. "After the space of fourteen years" it was time for him to stand forth the approved witness and minister of Jesus Christ, whom Peter and John publicly embraced as their equal.

Paul claims here the initiative in the momentous visit to Jerusalem undertaken by himself and Barnabas, of which he is going to speak. In Acts xv. 2 he is similarly placed at the head of the deputation sent from Antioch about the question of circumcision. The account of the preceding missionary tour in Acts xiii., xiv., shows how the headship of the Gentile Church had come to devolve on Paul. In Luke's narrative they are "Barnabas and Saul" who set out; "Paul and Barnabas" who return.* Under the trials and hazards of this adventure—at Paphos, Pisidian Antioch, Lystra —Paul's native ascendancy and his higher vocation irresistibly declared themselves. Age and rank yielded to the fire of inspiration, to the gifts of speech, the splendid powers of leadership which the difficulties of this expedition revealed in Paul. Barnabas returned to Antioch with the thought in his heart, "He must increase; I must decrease." And Barnabas was too generous a man not to yield cheerfully to his companion the precedence for which God thus marked him out. Yet the "sharp contention" in which the two men parted soon after this time (Acts xv. 36—40), was, we may conjecture, due in some degree to a lingering soreness in the mind of Barnabas on this account.

The Apostle expresses himself with modesty, but in such a way as to show that *he* was regarded in this juncture as the champion of the Gentile cause. The "revelation" that prompted the visit came to him. The "taking up of Titus" was his distinct act (ver. 1). Unless Paul has deceived himself, he was quite the leading figure in the Council; it was his doctrine and his Apostleship that exercised the minds of the chiefs

* Acts xiii. 2, 7, 13, 43, 45, 46, 50; xiv. 12, 14; xv. 2, 12

at Jerusalem, when the delegates from Antioch appeared before them. Whatever Peter and James may have known or surmised previously concerning Paul's vocation, it was only now that it became a public question for the Church. But as matters stood, it was a vital question. The status of uncircumcised Christians, and the Apostolic rank of Paul, constituted the twofold problem placed before the chiefs of the Jewish Church. At the same time, the Apostle, while fixing our attention mainly on his own position, gives to Barnabas his meed of honour; for he says, "I went up with Barnabas," —"*we* never yielded for an hour to the false brethren," —"the Pillars gave *to me and Barnabas* the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles." But it is evident that the elder Gentile missionary stood in the background. By the action that he takes Paul unmistakably declares, "I am the Apostle of the Gentiles;" * and that claim is admitted by the consenting voice of both branches of the Church. The Apostle stepped to the front at this solemn crisis, not for his own rank or office' sake, but at the call of God, in defence of the truth of the gospel and the spiritual freedom of mankind.

This meeting at Jerusalem took place in 51, or it may be, 52 A.D. We make no doubt that it is the same with the Council of Acts xv. The identification has been controverted by several able scholars, but without success. The two accounts are different, but in no sense contradictory. In fact, as Dr. Pfleiderer acknowledges,† they "admirably supplement each other. The agreement as to the chief points is in

* Comp. Rom. xi. 13; xv. 16, 17.

† *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 103. This testimony is the more valuable as coming from the ablest living exponent of the Baurian theory.

any case greater than the discrepancies in the details; and these discrepancies can for the most part be explained by the different standpoint of the relaters." A difficulty lies, however, in the fact that the historian of the Acts makes this the *third* visit of Paul to Jerusalem subsequently to his conversion; whereas, from the Apostle's statement, it appears to have been the *second*. This discrepancy has already come up for discussion in the last Chapter (p. 92). Two further observations may be added on this point. In the first place, Paul does not say that he had never been to Jerusalem since the visit of ch. i. 18; he does say, that on this occasion he "went up again," and that meanwhile he "remained unknown by face" to the Christians of Judæa (ch. i. 22)—a fact quite compatible, as we have shown, with what is related in Acts xi. 29, 30. And further, the request addressed at this conference to the Gentile missionaries, that they should "remember the poor," and the reference made by the Apostle to his previous zeal in the same business (vv. 9, 10), are in agreement with the earlier visit of charity mentioned by Luke.

I. The emphasis of ver. 1 rests upon its last clause, —*taking along with me also Titus*. Not "Titus as well as Barnabas"—this cannot be the meaning of the "also"—for Barnabas was Paul's colleague, deputed equally with himself by the Church of Antioch; nor "Titus as well as others"—there were other members of the deputation (Acts xv. 2), but Paul makes no reference to them. The *also* (καὶ) calls attention to the fact of Paul's taking *Titus*, in view of the sequel; as though he said, "I not only went up to Jerusalem at this particular time, under Divine direction, but I took along with me Titus besides." The prefixed *with*

(συν-) of the Greek participle refers to Paul himself: compare ver. 3, "Titus who was with me." As for the "certain others" referred to in Acts xv. 2, they were most likely Jews; or if any of them were Gentiles, still it was Titus whom Paul had chosen for his companion; and his case stood out from the rest in such a way that it became the decisive one, the *test-case* for the matter in dispute.

The mention of *Titus'* name in this connection was calculated to raise a lively interest in the minds of the Apostle's readers. He is introduced as known to the Galatians; indeed by this time his name was familiar in the Pauline Churches, as that of a fellow-traveller and trusted helper of the Apostle. He was with Paul in the latter part of the third missionary tour—so we learn from the Corinthian letters—and therefore probably in the earlier part of the same journey, when the Apostle paid his second visit to Galatia. He belonged to the heathen mission, and was Paul's "true child after a common faith" (Tit. i. 4), an uncircumcised man, of Gentile birth equally with the Galatians. And now they read of his "going up to Jerusalem with Paul," to the mother-city of believers, where are the pillars of the Church—the Jewish teachers would say—the true Apostles of Jesus, where His doctrine is preached in its purity, and where every Christian is circumcised and keeps the Law. Titus, the unclean Gentile, at Jerusalem! How could he be admitted or tolerated there, in the fellowship of the first disciples of the Lord? This question Paul's readers, after what they had heard from the Circumcisionists, would be sure to ask. He will answer it directly.

But the Apostle goes on to say, that he "went up in accordance with a revelation." For this was one

of those supreme moments in his life when he looked for and received the direct guidance of heaven. It was a most critical step to carry this question of Gentile circumcision up to Jerusalem, and to take Titus with him there, into the enemies' stronghold. Moreover, on the settlement of this matter Paul knew that his Apostolic status depended, so far as human recognition was concerned. It would be seen whether the Jewish Church would acknowledge the converts of the Gentile mission as brethren in Christ; and whether the first Apostles would receive him, "the untimely one," as a colleague of their own. Never had he more urgently needed or more implicitly relied upon Divine direction than at this hour.

"And I put before them (the Church at Jerusalem) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles—but privately to those of repute: am I running (said I), or have I run, in vain?" The latter clause we read *interrogatively*, along with such excellent grammatical interpreters as Meyer, Wieseler, and Hofmann. Paul had not come to Jerusalem *in order to solve any doubt in his own mind;* but he wished the Church of Jerusalem *to declare its mind* respecting the character of his ministry. He was not "running as uncertainly;" nor in view of the "revelation" just given him could he have any fear for the result of his appeal. But it was in every way necessary that the appeal should be made.

The interjected words, "but privately," etc., indicate that there were *two* meetings during the conference, such as those which seem to be distinguished in Acts xv. 4 and 6; and that the Apostle's statement and the question arising out of it were addressed more pointedly to "those of repute." By this term we understand,

here and in ver. 6, "the apostles and elders" (Acts xv.), headed by Peter and James, amongst whom "those reputed to be pillars" are distinguished in ver. 9. Paul dwells upon the phrase οἱ δοκοῦντες, because, to be sure, it was so often on the lips of the Judaizers, who were in the habit of speaking with an imposing air, and by way of contrast with Paul, of "the authorities" (at Jerusalem)—as the designation might appropriately be rendered. These very men whom the Legalists were exalting at Paul's expense, the venerated chiefs of the mother Church, had on this occasion, Paul is going to say, given their approval to his doctrine; they declined to impose circumcision on Gentile believers. The Twelve were not stationary at Jerusalem, and therefore could not form a fixed court of reference there; hence a greater importance accrued to the Elders of the city Church, with the revered James at their head, the brother of the Lord.

The Apostle, in bringing Titus, had brought up the subject-matter of the controversy. The "gospel of the uncircumcision" stood before the Jewish authorities, an accomplished fact. Titus was there, by the side of Paul, a sample—and a noble specimen, we can well believe—of the Gentile Christendom which the Jewish Church must either acknowledge or repudiate. How will they treat him? Will they admit this foreign protégé of Paul to their communion? Or will they require him first to be circumcised? The question at issue could not take a form more crucial for the prejudices of the mother Church. It was one thing to acknowledge uncircumcised fellow-believers in the abstract, away yonder at Antioch or Iconium, or even at Cæsarea; and another thing to see Titus standing amongst them in his heathen uncleanness, on the

sacred soil of Jerusalem, under the shadow of the Temple, and to hear Paul claiming for him—for this "dog" of a Gentile—equally with himself the rights of Christian brotherhood! The demand was most offensive to the pride of Judaism, as no one knew better than Paul; and we cannot wonder that a revelation was required to justify the Apostle in making it. The case of *Trophimus*, whose presence with the Apostle at Jerusalem many years afterwards proved so nearly fatal (Acts xxi. 27—30), shows how exasperating to the legalist party his action in this instance must have been. Had not Peter and the better spirits of the Church in Jerusalem laid to heart the lesson of the vision of Joppa, that "no man must be called common or unclean," and had not the wisdom of the Holy Spirit eminently guided this first Council of the Church,* Paul's challenge would have received a negative answer; and Jewish and Gentile Christianity must have been driven asunder.

The answer, the triumphant answer, to Paul's appeal comes in the next verse: "Nay, not even† Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised." Titus *was not circumcised*, in point of fact—how can we doubt this in view of the language of ver. 5: "Not even for an hour did we yield in subjection?" And he "was *not compelled* to be circumcised"—a mode of putting the denial which implies that in refusing his circumcision urgent solicitation had

* Acts xv. 28: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." This was in the Early Church no mere pious official form.

† For this use of ἀλλ' οὐδέ compare Acts xix. 2 (here also after a question); 1 Cor. iii. 2; iv. 3. We observe a similar instance of the phrase in Æschylus, *Persæ*, l. 792. Ἀλλ' opposes itself to the expectation of the Judaistic "compellers," present to the mind of Paul and his readers.

to be withstood, solicitation addressed to Titus himself, as well as to the leaders of his party. The kind of pressure brought to bear in the case and the quarter from which it proceeded, the Galatians would understand from their own experience (ch. vi. 12; comp. ii. 14).

The attempt made to bring about Titus' circumcision signally failed. Its failure was the practical reply to the question which Paul tells us (ver. 2) he had put to the authorities in Jerusalem; or, according to the more common rendering of ver. 2*b*, it was the answer to the apprehension under which he addressed himself to them. On the former of these views of the connection, which we decidedly prefer, the authorities are clear of any share in the "compulsion" of Titus. When the Apostle gives the statement that his Gentile companion "was not compelled to be circumcised" as the reply to his appeal to "those of repute," it is as much as to say: "The chiefs at Jerusalem did not require Titus' circumcision. They repudiated the attempt of certain parties to force this rite upon him." This testimony precisely accords with the terms of the rescript of the Council, and with the speeches of Peter and James, given in Acts xv. But it was a great point gained to have the liberality of the Jewish Christian leaders put to the proof in this way, to have the generous sentiments of speech and letter made good in this example of uncircumcised Christianity brought to their doors.

To the authorities at Jerusalem the question put by the delegates from Antioch on the one side, and by the Circumcisionists on the other, was perfectly clear. If they insist on Titus' circumcision, they disown Paul and the Gentile mission: if they accept Paul's gospel, they must leave Titus alone. Paul and Barnabas

stated the case in a manner that left no room for doubt or compromise. Their action was marked, as ver. 5 declares, with the utmost decision. And the response of the Jewish leaders was equally frank and definite. We have no business, says James (Acts xv. 19), "to trouble those from the Gentiles that turn to God." Their judgement is virtually affirmed in ver. 3, in reference to Titus, in whose person the Galatians could not fail to see that their own case had been settled by anticipation. "Those of repute" disowned the Circumcisionists; the demand that the yoke of circumcision should be imposed on the Gentiles had no sanction from them. If the Judaizers claimed their sanction, the claim was false.

Here the Apostle pauses, as his Gentile readers must have paused and drawn a long breath of relief or of astonishment at what he has just alleged. If Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, even at Jerusalem, who, they might ask, was going to compel *them*?—The full stop should therefore be placed at the end of ver. 3, not ver. 2. Vv. 1—3 form a paragraph complete in itself. Its last sentence resolves the decisive question raised in this visit of Paul's to Jerusalem, when he "took with him also Titus."

II. The opening words of ver. 4 have all the appearance of commencing a new sentence. This sentence, concluded in ver. 5, is grammatically incomplete; but that is no reason for throwing it upon the previous sentence, to the confusion of both. There is a transition of thought, marked by the introductory *But*,* from the issue of Paul's second critical visit to Jerusalem (vv. 1—3) to

* This particle is a serious obstacle in the way of the ordinary punctuation, which attaches the following clause to ver. 3. The δὲ is similar to that of ver. 6 (ἀπὸ δὲ τ. δοκούντων); not of κατ' ἰδίαν δὲ in ver.

the cause which made it necessary. This was the action of "false brethren," to whom the Apostle made a determined and successful resistance (vv. 4, 5). The opening "But" does not refer to ver. 3 in particular, rather to the entire foregoing paragraph. The ellipsis (after "But") is suitably supplied in the marginal rendering of the Revisers, where we take *it was* to mean, not "Because of the false brethren *Titus was not* (or *was not compelled to be*) *circumcised*," but "Because of the false brethren *this meeting came about*, or, *I took the course aforesaid*."

To know what Paul means by "false brethren," we must turn to ch. i. 6—9, iii. 1, iv. 17, v. 7—12, vi. 12—14, in this Epistle; and again to 2 Cor. ii. 17—iii. 1, iv. 2, xi. 3, 4, 12—22, 26; Rom. xvi. 17, 18; Phil. iii. 2. They were men bearing the name of Christ and professing faith in Him, but Pharisees at heart, self-seeking, rancorous, unscrupulous men, bent on exploiting the Pauline Churches for their own advantage, and regarding Gentile converts to Christ as so many possible recruits for the ranks of the Circumcision.

But where, and how, were these traitors "privily brought in?" Brought in, we answer, to the field of the Gentile mission; and doubtless by local Jewish sympathisers, who introduced them without the concurrence of the officers of the Church. They "came in privily"—slipped in by stealth—"to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus." Now it was at Antioch and in the pagan Churches that this liberty existed in

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2, nor of *θανάτου δὲ σταύρου* (Phil. ii. 8). which are parenthetical qualifications. And to say, "Because of the false brethren Titus was not compelled to be circumcised," is simply an inconsequence. Would he have been compelled to be circumcised if they had *not* required it? This is the assumption implied by the above construction.

its normal exercise—the liberty for which our Epistle contends, the enjoyment of Christian privileges independently of Jewish law—in which Paul and his brother missionaries had identified themselves with their Gentile followers. The "false brethren" were Jewish spies in the Gentile Christian camp. We do not see how the Galatians could have read the Apostle's words otherwise; nor how it could have occurred to them that he was referring to the way in which these men had been originally "brought into" the Jewish Church. That concerned neither him nor them. But *their getting into the Gentile fold* was the serious thing. They are the "certain who came down from Judæa, and taught the (Gentile) brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved;" and whom their own Church afterwards repudiated (Acts xv. 24). With Antioch for the centre of their operations, these mischief-makers disturbed the whole field of Paul and Barnabas' labours in Syria and Cilicia (Acts xv. 23; comp. Gal. i. 21). For the Galatian readers, the terms of this sentence, coming after the anathema of ch. i. 6—9, threw a startling light on the character of the Judean emissaries busy in their midst. This description of the former "troublers" strikes at the Judaic opposition in Galatia. It is as if the Apostle said: "These false brethren, smuggled in amongst us, to filch away our liberties in Christ, wolves in sheep's clothing—I know them well; I have encountered them before this. I never yielded to their demands a single inch. I carried the struggle with them to Jerusalem. There, in the citadel of Judaism, and before the assembled chiefs of the Judean Church, I vindicated once and for all, under the person of Titus, your imperilled Christian rights."

But as the Apostle dilates on the conduct of these Jewish intriguers, the precursors of such an army of troublers, his heart takes fire; in the rush of his emotion he is carried away from the original purport of his sentence, and breaks it off with a burst of indignation: "To whom," he cries, "not even for an hour did we yield by subjection, that the truth of the gospel might abide with you." A breakdown like this—an *anacoluthon*, as the grammarians call it—is nothing strange in Paul's style. Despite the shipwrecked grammar, the sense comes off safely enough. The clause, "we did not yield," etc., describes in a negative form, and with heightened effect, the course the Apostle had pursued from the first in dealing with the false brethren. In this unyielding spirit he had acted, without a moment's wavering, from the hour when, guided by the Holy Spirit, he set out for Jerusalem with the uncircumcised Titus by his side, until he heard his Gentile gospel vindicated by the lips of Peter and James, and received from them the clasp of fellowship as Christ's acknowledged Apostle to the heathen.

It was therefore the action of Jewish interlopers, men of the same stamp as those infesting the Galatian Churches, which occasioned Paul's second, public visit to Jerusalem, and his consultation with the heads of the Judean Church. This decisive course he was himself inspired to take; while at the same time it was taken on behalf and under the direction of the Church of Antioch, the metropolis of Gentile Christianity. He had gone up with Barnabas and "certain others"—including the Greek Titus chosen by himself—the company forming a representative deputation, of which Paul was the leader and spokesman. This measure was the boldest and the only effectual means of combatting

the Judaistic propaganda. It drew from the authorities at Jerusalem the admission that "Circumcision is nothing," and that Gentile Christians are free from the ritual law. This was a victory gained over Jewish prejudice of immense significance for the future of Christianity. The ground was already cut from under the feet of the Judaic teachers in Galatia, and of all who should at any time seek to impose external rites as things essential to salvation in Christ. To all his readers Paul can now say, so far as his part is concerned: *The truth of the gospel abides with you.*

CHAPTER VIII.

PAUL AND THE THREE PILLARS.

"But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (what they once were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth not man's person)—they, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me: but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with *the gospel* of the circumcision (for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles); and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision; only *they would* that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do."—GAL. ii. 6—10.

WE have dealt by anticipation, in Chapter VI., with several of the topics raised in this section of the Epistle—touching particularly the import of the phrase "those of repute," and the tone of disparagement in which these dignitaries appear to be spoken of in ver. 6. But there still remains in these verses matter in its weight and difficulty more than sufficient to occupy another Chapter.

The grammatical connection of the first paragraph, like that of vv. 2, 3, is involved and disputable. We construe its clauses in the following way:—(1) Ver. 6 begins with a *But*, contrasting "those of repute" with the "false brethren" dealt with in the last sentence. It contains another *anacoluthon* (or incoherence of lan-

guage), due to the surge of feeling remarked in ver. 4, which still disturbs the Apostle's grammar. He begins: "But from those reputed to be something"—as though he intended to say, "I received on my part nothing, no addition or qualification to my gospel." But he has no sooner mentioned "those of repute" than he is reminded of the studied attempt that was made to set up their authority in opposition to his own, and accordingly throws in this protest: "what they were aforetime,* makes no difference to me: man's person God doth not accept." But in saying this, Paul has laid down one of his favourite axioms, a principle that filled a large place in his thoughts;† and its enunciation deflects the course of the main sentence, so that it is resumed in an altered form: "For to me those of repute imparted nothing." Here the *me* receives a greater emphasis; and *for* takes the place of *but*. The fact that the first Apostles had nothing to impart to Paul, signally illustrates the Divine impartiality, which often makes the last and least in human eyes equal to the first.

(2) Vv. 7—9 state the *positive*, as ver. 6 the *negative* side of the relation between Paul and the elder Apostles, still keeping in view the principle laid down in the former verse. "Nay, on the contrary, when they saw that I have in charge the gospel of the uncircumcision, as Peter that of the circumcision (ver. 7)—and when they perceived the grace that had been given me, James and Cephas and John, those renowned pillars of the Church, gave the right hand of fellowship to myself and

* For this rendering of ποτὲ comp. ch. i. 13, 23; and see Lightfoot, or Beet, *in loc.*

† Comp. Rom. ii. 11; 1 Cor. i. 27—31; xv. 9, 10; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iii. 25.

Barnabas, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles, while they laboured amongst the Jews" (ver. 9).

(3) Ver. 8 comes in as a parenthesis, explaining how the authorities at Jerusalem came to see that this trust belonged to Paul. "For," he says, "He that in Peter's case displayed His power in making him (above all others) Apostle of the Circumcision, did as much for me in regard to the Gentiles." It is not human ordination, but Divine inspiration that makes a minister of Jesus Christ. The noble Apostles of Jesus had the wisdom to see this. It had pleased God to bestow this grace on their old Tarsian persecutor; and they frankly acknowledged the fact.

Thus Paul sets forth, in the first place, *the completeness of his Apostolic qualifications*, put to proof at the crisis of the circumcision controversy; and in the second place, *the judgement formed respecting him and his office by the first Apostles and companions of the Lord.*

I. "To me those of repute added nothing." Paul had spent but a fortnight in the Christian circle of Jerusalem, fourteen years ago. Of its chiefs he had met at that time only Peter and James, and them in the capacity of a visitor, not as a disciple or a candidate for office. He had never sought the opportunity, nor felt the need, of receiving instruction from the elder Apostles during all the years in which he had preached Christ amongst the heathen. It was not likely he would do so now. When he came into conference and debate with them at the Council, he showed himself their equal, neither in knowledge nor authority "a whit behind the very chiefest." And they were conscious of the same fact.

On the essentials of the gospel Paul found himself in agreement with the Twelve. This is implied in the language of ver. 6. When one writes, "A adds nothing

to B," one assumes that B has already what belongs to A, and not something different. Paul asserts in the most positive terms he can command, that his intercourse with the holders of the primitive Christian tradition left him as a minister of Christ exactly where he was before. "On me," he says, "they conferred nothing"—rather, perhaps, "*addressed no communication* to me." The word used appears to deny their having made any motion of the kind. The Greek verb is the same that was employed in ch. i. 16, a rare and delicate compound.* Its meaning varies, like that of our *confer*, *communicate*, as it is applied in a more or less active sense. In the former place Paul had said that he "did not confer with flesh and blood"; now he adds, that flesh and blood did not confer anything upon him. Formerly he did not bring his commission to lay it before men; now they had nothing to bring on their part to lay before him. The same word affirms the Apostle's independence at both epochs, shown in the first instance by his reserve toward the dignitaries at Jerusalem, and in the second by their reserve toward him. Conscious of his Divine call, he sought no patronage from the elder Apostles then; and they, recognising that call, offered him no such patronage now. Paul's gospel for the Gentiles was complete, and sufficient unto itself. His ministry showed no defect in quality or competence. There was nothing about it that laid it open to correction, even on the part of those wisest and highest in dignity amongst the personal followers of Jesus.

* We cannot explain προσανέθεντο here by the ἀνεθέμην of ver. 2, as though Paul wished to say, "I imparted to them my gospel; they imparted to me nothing *further*." For προς- implies *direction*, rather than *addition*. See Meyer on this verb in ch. i. 16.

So Paul declares; and we can readily believe him. Nay, we are tempted to think that it was rather the Pillars who might need to learn from him, than he from them. In doctrine, Paul holds the primacy in the band of the Apostles. While all were inspired by the Spirit of Christ, the Gentile Apostle was in many ways a more richly furnished man than any of the rest. The Paulinism of Peter's First Epistle goes to show that the debt was on the other side. Their earlier privileges and priceless store of recollections of "all that Jesus did and taught," were matched on Paul's side by a penetrating logic, a breadth and force of intellect applied to the facts of revelation, and a burning intensity of spirit, which in their combination were unique. The Pauline teaching, as it appears in the New Testament, bears in the highest degree the marks of original genius, the stamp of a mind whose inspiration is its own.

Modern criticism even exaggerates Paul's originality. It leaves the other Apostles little more than a negative part to play in the development of Christian truth. In some of its representations, the figure of Paul appears to overshadow even that of the Divine Master. It was Paul's creative genius, it is said, his daring idealism, that deified the human Jesus, and transformed the scandal of the cross into the glory of an atonement reconciling the world to God. Such theories Paul himself would have regarded with horror. "I received *of the Lord* that which I delivered unto you:" such is his uniform testimony. If he owed so little as a minister of Christ to his brother Apostles, he felt with the most sincere humility that he owed everything to Christ. The agreement of Paul's teaching with that of the other New Testament writers, and especially with that of Jesus in the Gospels, proves that, however

distinct and individual his conception of the common gospel, none the less there was a common gospel of Christ, and he did not speak of his own mind. The attempts made to get rid of this agreement by post-dating the New Testament documents, and by explaining away the larger utterances of Jesus found in the Gospels as due to Paulinist interpolation, are unavailing. They postulate a craftiness of ingenuity on the part of the writers of the incriminated books, and an ignorance in those who first received them, alike inconceivable. Paul did not build up the splendid and imperishable fabric of his theology on some speculation of his own. Its foundation lies in the person and the teaching of Jesus Christ, and was common to Paul with James and Cephas and John. "Whether I or they," he testifies, "so we preach, and so ye believed" (1 Cor. xv. 11). Paul satisfied himself at this conference that he and the Twelve taught the same gospel. Not in its primary data, but in their logical development and application, lies the specifically *Pauline* in Paulinism. The harmony between Paul and the other Apostolic leaders has the peculiar value which belongs to the agreement of minds of different orders, working independently.

The Judaizers, however, persistently asserted Paul's dependence on the elder Apostles. "The authority of the Primitive Church, the Apostolic tradition of Jerusalem"—this was the fulcrum of their argument. Where could Paul, they asked, have derived his knowledge of Christ, but from this fountain-head? And the power that made him, could unmake him. Those who commissioned him had the right to overrule him, or even to revoke his commission. Was it not known that he had from time to time resorted to Jerusalem; that he

had once publicly submitted his teaching to the examination of the heads of the Church there? The words of ver. 6 contradict these malicious insinuations. Hence the positiveness of the Apostle's self-assertion. In the Corinthian Epistles his claim to independence is made in gentler style, and with expressions of humility that might have been misunderstood here. But the position Paul takes up is the same in either case: "I am an Apostle. I have seen Jesus our Lord. You—Corinthians, Galatians—are my work in the Lord." That Peter and the rest were in the old days so near to the Master, "makes no difference" to Paul. They are what they are—their high standing is universally acknowledged, and Paul has no need or wish to question it; but, by the grace of God, *he* also is what he is (1 Cor. xv. 10). Their Apostleship does not exclude or derogate from his.

The self-depreciation, the keen sense of inferiority in outward respects, so evident in Paul's allusions to this subject elsewhere, is after all not wanting here. For when he says, "God regards not *man's person*," it is evident that in respect of visible qualifications Paul felt that he had few pretensions to make. Appearances were against him. And those who "glory in appearance" were against him too (2 Cor. v. 12). Such men could not appreciate the might of the Spirit that wrought in Paul, nor the sovereignty of Divine election. They "reckoned" of the Apostle "as though he walked according to flesh" (2 Cor. x. 2). It seemed to them obvious, as a matter of course, that he was far below the Twelve. With men of worldly wisdom the Apostle did not expect that his arguments would prevail. His appeal was to "the spiritual, who judge all things."

So we come back to the declaration of the Apostle

in ch. i. 11: "I give you to know, brethren, that my gospel is not according to man." Man had no hand either in laying its foundation or putting on the head-stone. Paul's predecessors in Apostolic office did not impart the gospel to him at the outset; nor at a later time had they attempted to make any addition to the doctrine he had taught far and wide amongst the heathen. His Apostleship was from first to last a supernatural gift of grace.

II. Instead, therefore, of assuming to be his superiors, or offering to bestow something of their own on Paul, *the three renowned pillars of the faith at Jerusalem acknowledged him as a brother Apostle.*

"They saw that I am intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision." The form of the verb implies a trust given in the past and taking effect in the present, a settled fact. Once for all, this charge had devolved on Paul. He is "appointed herald and apostle" of "Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all,—teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (1 Tim. ii. 6, 7). That office Paul still holds. He is the leader of Christian evangelism. Every new movement in heathen missionary enterprise looks to his teaching for guidance and inspiration.

The conference at Jerusalem in itself furnished conclusive evidence of Paul's Apostolic commission. The circumcision controversy was a test not only for Gentile Christianity, but at the same time for its Apostle and champion. Paul brought to this discussion a knowledge and insight, a force of character, a conscious authority and unction of the Holy Spirit, that powerfully impressed the three great men who listened to him. The triumvirate at Jerusalem well knew that Paul had not received his marvellous gifts through

their hands. Nor was there anything lacking to him which they felt themselves called upon to supply. They could only say, "This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes." Knowing, as Peter at least, we presume, had done for many years,* the history of Paul's conversion, and seeing as they now did the conspicuous Apostolic signs attending his ministry, James and Cephas and John could only come to one conclusion. The gospel of the uncircumcision, they were convinced, was committed to Paul, and his place in the Church was side by side with Peter. Peter must have felt as once before on a like occasion: "If God gave unto him a gift equal to that He gave to me, who am I, that I should be able to hinder God?" (Acts xi. 17). It was not for them because of their elder rank and dignity to debate with God in this matter, and to withhold their recognition from His "chosen vessel."

John had not forgotten his Master's reproof for banning the man that "followeth not with us" (Luke ix. 49; Mark ix. 38). They "recognised," Paul says, "the grace that had been given me;" and by that he means, to be sure, the undeserved favour that raised him to his Apostolic office.† This recognition was given to *Paul.* Barnabas shared the "fellowship." His hand was clasped by the three chiefs at Jerusalem, not less warmly than that of his younger comrade. But it is in the singular number that Paul speaks of "the grace that was given *me*," and of the "trust in the gospel" and the "working of God *unto Apostleship*."

Why then does not Paul say outright, "they acknowledged me an Apostle, the equal of Peter?" Some are

* Ch. i. 18. See Chapter V., p. 87.

† See Rom. i. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 10; Eph. iii. 2, 7, 8; 1 Tim. i. 13.

bold enough to say—*Holsten* in particular—"Because this is just what the Jerusalem chiefs never did, and never could have done."* We will only reply, that if this were the case, the passage is a continued *suggestio falsi.* No one could write the words of vv. 7—9, without intending his readers to believe that such a recognition took place. Paul avoids the point-blank assertion, with a delicacy that any man of tolerable modesty will understand. Even the appearance of "glorying" was hateful to him (2 Cor. x. 17; xi. 1; xii. 1—5, 11).

The Church at Jerusalem, as we gather from vv. 7, 8, observed in Paul "signs of the Apostle" resembling those borne by Peter. His Gentile commission ran parallel with Peter's Jewish commission. The labours of the two men were followed by the same kind of success, and marked by similar displays of miraculous power. The like seal of God was stamped on both. This correspondence runs through the Acts of the Apostles. Compare, for example, Paul's sermon at Antioch in Pisidia with that of Peter on the Day of Pentecost; the healing of the Lystran cripple and the punishment of Elymas, with the case of the lame man at the Temple gate and the encounter of Peter and Simon Magus. The conjunction of the names of Peter and Paul was familiar to the Apostolic Church. The parallelism between the course of these great Apostles was no invention of second-century orthodoxy, set up in the interests of a "reconciling hypothesis;" it attracted public attention as early as 51 A.D., while they were still in their mid career. If this idea so strongly possessed the minds of the Jewish Christian leaders and influenced their action at the Council of

* *Zum Evangelien d. Paulus und d. Petrus*, p. 273. Holsten is the keenest and most logical of all the Baurian succession

Jerusalem, we need not be surprised that it should dominate Luke's narrative to the extent that it does. The allusions to Peter in 1 Corinthians * afford further proof that in the lifetime of the two Apostles it was a common thing to link their names together.

But had not Peter also a share in the Gentile mission? Does not the division of labour made at this conference appear to shut out the senior Apostle from a field to which he had the prior claim? "Ye know," said Peter at the Council, "how that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts xv. 7). To Peter was assigned the double honour of "opening the door of faith" both to Jew and Gentile. This experience made him the readier to understand Paul's position, and gave him the greater weight in the settlement of the question at issue. And not Peter alone, but Philip the evangelist and other Jewish Christians had carried the gospel across the line of Judaic prejudice, before Paul appeared on the scene. Barnabas and Silas were both emissaries of Jerusalem. So that the mother Church, if she could not claim Paul as her son, had nevertheless a large stake in the heathen mission. But when Paul came to the front, when his miraculous call, his incomparable gifts and wonderful success had made themselves known, it was evident to every discerning mind that he was the man chosen by God to direct this great work. Peter had *opened* the door of faith to the heathen, and had bravely kept it open; but it was for Paul to lead the Gentile nations through the open door, and to make a home for them within the fold of Christ. The men

* Ch. i. 12; iii. 22; ix. 5.

who had laboured in this field hitherto were Paul's forerunners. And Peter does not hesitate to acknowledge the younger Apostle's special fitness for this wider province of their common work; and with the concurrence of James and John he yields the charge of it to him.

Let us observe that it is two different *provinces*, not different gospels, that are in view. When the Apostle speaks of "the gospel of the uncircumcision" as committed to himself, and that "of the circumcision" to Peter, he never dreams of any one supposing, as some of his modern critics persist in doing, that he meant two different *doctrines*. How can that be possible, when he has declared those *anathema* who preach any other gospel? He has laid his gospel before the heads of the Jerusalem Church. Nothing has occurred there, nothing is hinted here, to suggest the existence of a "radical divergence." If James and the body of the Judean Church really sympathised with the Circumcisionists, with those whom the Apostle calls "false brethren," how could he with any sincerity have come to an agreement with them, knowing that this tremendous gulf was lying all the while between the Pillars and himself? Zeller argues that the transaction was simply a pledge of "reciprocal toleration, a merely external concordat between Paul and the original Apostles."* The clasp of brotherly friendship was a sorry farce, if that were all it meant—if Paul and the Three just consented for the time to slur over irreconcilable differences; while Paul in turn has glossed over the affair for us in these artful verses! Baur, with characteristic *finesse*, says on the same point: "The

* *The Acts of the Apostles critically investigated*, vol. ii., pp. 28, 30: Eng. Trans.

κοινωνία was always a division; it could only be brought into effect by one party going εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, the other εἰς τὴν περιτομήν. As the Jewish Apostles could allege nothing against the principles on which Paul founded his evangelical mission, they were obliged to recognise them in a certain manner; but their recognition was a mere outward one. They left him to work on these principles still further in the cause of the gospel among the Gentiles; but for themselves they did not desire to know anything more about them." * So that, according to the Tübingen critics, we witness in ver. 9 not a union, but a divorce! The Jewish Apostles recognise Paul as a brother, only in order to get rid of him. Can misinterpretation be more unjust than this? Paul does not say, "They gave us the right hand of fellowship *on condition that*," but, "*in order that* we should go this way, they that." As much as to say: The two parties came together and entered into a closer union, so that with the best mutual understanding each might go its own way and pursue its proper work in harmony with the other. For Paul it would have been a sacrilege to speak of the diplomatic compromise which Baur and Zeller describe as "giving the right hand of fellowship."

Never did the Church more deeply realise than at her first Council the truth, that "there is one body and one Spirit; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. iv. 4—6). Paul still seems to feel his hand in the warm grasp of Peter and of John when he writes to the Ephesians of "the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself for

* *Paulus*, vol. i., p. 130: Eng. Trans.

chief corner-stone; in whom the whole building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (ch. ii. 20, 21). Alas for the criticism that is obliged to see in words like these the invention of second-century churchmanship, putting into the mouth of Paul catholic sentiments of which in reality he knew nothing! Such writers know nothing of the power of that fellowship of the Spirit which reigned in the glorious company of the Apostles.

"Only they would have us remember the poor"—a circumstance mentioned partly by way of reminder to the Galatians touching the collection for Jerusalem, which Paul had already set on foot amongst them (1 Cor. xvi. 1). The request was prompted by the affectionate confidence with which the Jewish chiefs embraced Paul and Barnabas. It awakened an eager response in the Apostle's breast. His love to his Jewish kindred made him welcome the suggestion. Moreover every deed of charity rendered by the wealthier Gentile Churches to "the poor saints in Jerusalem," was another tie helping to bind the two communities to each other. Of such liberality Antioch, under the direction of the Gentile missionaries, had already set the example (Acts xi. 29, 30).

James, *Peter*, *John*, and *Paul*—it was a memorable day when these four men met face to face. What a mighty quaternion! Amongst them they have virtually made the New Testament and the Christian Church. They represent the four sides of the one foundation of the City of God. Of the Evangelists, Matthew holds affinity with James; Mark with Peter; and Luke with Paul. James clings to the past and embodies the transition from Mosaism to Christianity. Peter is the

man of the present, quick in thought and action, eager, buoyant, susceptible. Paul holds the future in his grasp, and schools the unborn nations. John gathers present, past, and future into one, lifting us into the region of eternal life and love.

With Peter and James Paul had met before, and was to meet again. But so far as we can learn, this was the only occasion on which his path crossed that of *John*. Nor is this Apostle mentioned again in Paul's letters. In the Acts he appears but once or twice, standing silent in Peter's shadow. A holy reserve surrounds John's person in the earlier Apostolic history. His hour was not yet come. But his name ranked in public estimation amongst the three foremost of the Jewish Church; and he exercised, doubtless, a powerful, though quiet, conciliatory influence in the settlement of the Gentile question. The personality of Paul excited, we may be sure, the profoundest interest in such a mind as that of John. He absorbed, and yet in a sense transcended, the Pauline theology. The Apocalypse, although the most Judaic book of the New Testament, is penetrated with the influence of Paulinism. The detection in it of a covert attack on the Gentile Apostle is simply one of the mare's nests of a super-subtle and suspicious criticism. John was to be the heir of Paul's labours at Ephesus and in Asia Minor. And John's long life, touching the verge of the second century, his catholic position, his serene and lofty spirit, blending in itself and resolving into a higher unity the tendencies of James and Peter and Paul, give us the best assurance that in the Apostolic age there was indeed "One, holy, catholic, Apostolic Church."

Paul's fellowship with Peter and with James was cordial and endeared. But to hold the hand of John,

"the disciple whom Jesus loved," was a yet higher satisfaction. That clasp symbolized a union between men most opposite in temperament and training, and brought to the knowledge of Christ in very different ways, but whose communion in Him was deep as the life eternal. Paul and John are the two master minds of the New Testament. Of all men that ever lived, these two best understood Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IX.

PAUL AND PETER AT ANTIOCH.

"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, yet knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, but only through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor."—GAL. ii. 11—18.

THE conference at Jerusalem issued in the formal recognition by the Primitive Church of Gentile Christianity, and of Paul's plenary Apostleship. And it brought Paul into brotherly relations with the three great leaders of Jewish Christianity. But this fellowship was not to continue undisturbed. The same cause was still at work which had compelled the Apostle to go up to Jerusalem, taking Titus with him.

The leaven of Pharisaic legalism remained in the Church. Indeed, as time went on and the national fanaticism grew more violent, this spirit of intolerance became increasingly bitter and active. The address of James to Paul on the occasion of his last visit to the Holy City, shows that the Church of Jerusalem was at this time in a state of the most sensitive jealousy in regard to the Law, and that the legalistic prejudices always existing in it had gained a strength with which it was difficult to cope (Acts xxi. 17—25).

But for the present the Judaizing faction had received a check. It does not appear that the party ever again insisted on circumcision as a thing essential to salvation for the Gentiles. The utterances of Peter and James at the Council, and the circular addressed therefrom to the Gentile Churches, rendered this impossible. The Legalists made a change of front; and adopted a subtler and seemingly more moderate policy. *They now preached circumcision as the prerogative of the Jew within the Church, and as a counsel of perfection for the Gentile believer in Christ* (ch. iii. 3). To quote the rescript of Acts xv. against this altered form of the circumcisionist doctrine, would have been wide of the mark.

It is against this newer type of Judaistic teaching that our Epistle is directed. Circumcision, its advocates argued, was a Divine ordinance that must have its benefit. God has given to Israel an indefeasible pre-eminence in His kingdom.† Law-keeping children of Abraham enter the new Covenant on a higher footing than "sinners of the Gentiles:" they are still the elect race, the holy nation. If the Gentiles wish

* Rom. ii. 25—iii. 1.

† Rom. i. 16; ii. 9, 10; ix. 4, 5; xi. 1, 2.

to share with them, they must add to their faith circumcision, they must complete their imperfect righteousness by legal sanctity. So they might hope to enter on the full heritage of the sons of Abraham; they would be brought into communion with the first Apostles and the Brother of the Lord; they would be admitted to the inner circle of the kingdom of God. The new Legalists sought, in fact, to superimpose Jewish on Gentile Christianity. They no longer refused all share in Christ to the uncircumcised; they offered them a larger share. So we construe the teaching which Paul had to combat in the second stage of his conflict with Judaism, to which his four major Epistles belong. And the signal for this renewed struggle was given by the collision with Peter at Antioch.

This encounter did not, we think, take place on the return of Paul and Barnabas from the Council. The compact of Jerusalem secured to the Church a few years of rest from the Judaistic agitation. The Thessalonian Epistles, written in 52 or 53 A.D., go to show, not only that the Churches of Macedonia were free from the legalist contention, but that it did not at this period occupy the Apostle's mind. Judas Barsabbas and Silas—not Peter—accompanied the Gentile missionaries in returning to Antioch; and Luke gives, in Acts xv., a tolerably full account of the circumstances which transpired there in the interval before the second missionary tour, without the slightest hint of any visit made at this time by the Apostle Peter. We can scarcely believe that the circumcision party had already recovered, and increased its influence, to the degree that it must have done when "even Barnabas was carried away"; still less

that Peter on the very morrow of the settlement at Jerusalem and of his fraternal communion there with Paul would show himself so far estranged.

When, therefore, did "Cephas come down to Antioch?" The Galatians evidently knew. The Judaizers had given their account of the matter, to Paul's disadvantage. Perhaps he had referred to it himself on his last visit to Galatia, when we know he spoke explicitly and strongly against the Circumcisionists (ch. i. 9). Just before his arrival in Galatia on this occasion he had "spent some time" at Antioch (Acts xviii. 22, 23), in the interval between the second and third missionary journeys. Luke simply mentions the fact, without giving any details. This is the likeliest opportunity for the meeting of the two Apostles in the Gentile capital. M. Sabatier,* in the following sentences, appears to us to put the course of events in its true light:—"Evidently the Apostle had quitted Jerusalem and undertaken his second missionary journey full of satisfaction at the victory he had gained, and free from anxiety for the future. The decisive moment of the crisis therefore necessarily falls between the Thessalonian and Galatian Epistles. What had happened in the meantime? *The violent discussion with Peter at Antioch* (Gal. ii. 11—21), and all that this account reveals to us,—the arrival of the emissaries from James in the pagan-Christian circle, the counter-mission organized by the Judaizers to rectify the work of Paul. A new situation suddenly presents itself to the eyes of the Apostle on his return from his second missionary journey. He is compelled to throw himself into the struggle, and in doing so to formulate

* In his *L'apôtre Paul: esquisse d'une histoire de sa pensée*, an admirable work, to which the writer is under great obligation.

in all its rigour his principle of the abolishment of the Law."

The "troublers" in this instance were "certain from James." Like the "false brethren"* who appeared at Antioch three years before, they came from the mother Church, over which James presided. The Judaizing teachers at Corinth had their "commendatory letters" (2 Cor. iii. 1), derived assuredly from the same quarter. In all likelihood, their confederates in Galatia brought similar credentials. We have already seen that the authority of the Primitive Church was the chief weapon used by Paul's adversaries. These letters of commendation were part of the machinery of the anti-Pauline agitation. How the Judaizers obtained these credentials, and in what precise relation they stood to James, we can only conjecture. Had the Apostle held James responsible for their action, he would not have spared him any more than he has done Peter. James held a quasi-pastoral relation to Christian Jews of the Dispersion. And as he addressed his Epistle to them, so he would be likely on occasion to send delegates to visit them. Perhaps the Circumcisionists found opportunity to pass themselves off in this character; or they may have abused a commission really given them, by interfering with Gentile communities. That the Judaistic emissaries in some way or other adopted false colours, is plainly intimated in 2 Cor. xi. 13. James, living always at Jerusalem, being moreover a man of simple character, could have little suspected the crafty plot which was carried forward under his name.

These agents addressed themselves in the first

* See Chapter VII. pp. 109, 110.

instance to *the Jews*, as their commission from Jerusalem probably entitled them to do. They plead for the maintenance of the sacred customs. They insist that the Mosaic rites carry with them an indelible sanctity; that their observance constitutes a Church within the Church. If this separation is once established, and the Jewish believers in Christ can be induced to hold themselves aloof and to maintain the "advantage of circumcision," the rest will be easy. The way will then be open to "compel the Gentiles to Judaize." For unless they do this, they must be content to remain on a lower level, in a comparatively menial position, resembling that of uncircumcised proselytes in the Synagogue. The circular of the Jerusalem Council may have been interpreted by the Judaists in this sense, as though it laid down the terms, not of full communion between Jew and Gentile believers, but only of a permissive, secondary recognition. At Antioch the new campaign of the Legalists was opened, and apparently with signal success. In Galatia and Corinth we see it in full progress.

The withdrawal of Peter and the other Jews at Antioch from the table of the Gentiles virtually "compelled" the latter "to Judaize." Not that the Jewish Apostle had this intention in his mind. He was made the tool of designing men. By "separating himself" he virtually said to every uncircumcised brother, "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou." Legal conformity on the part of the Gentiles was made the condition of their communion with Jewish Christians —a demand simply fatal to Christianity. It re-established the principle of salvation by works in a more invidious form. To supplement the righteousness of faith by that of law, meant to *supplant* it. To admit

that the Israelite by virtue of his legal observances stood in a higher position than "sinners of the Gentiles," was to stultify the doctrine of the cross, to make Christ's death a gratuitous sacrifice. Peter's error, pushed to its logical consequences, involved the overthrow of the Gospel. This the Gentile Apostle saw at a glance. The situation was one of imminent danger. Paul needed all his wisdom, and all his courage and promptitude to meet it.

It had been Peter's previous rule, since the vision of Joppa, to lay aside Jewish scruples of diet and to live in free intercourse with Gentile brethren. He "was wont to eat with the Gentiles. Though a born Jew, he lived in Gentile fashion"—words unmistakably describing Peter's general habit in such circumstances. This Gentile conformity of Peter was a fact of no small moment for the Galatian readers. It contravenes the assertion of a radical divergence between Petrine and Pauline Christianity, whether made by Ebionites or Baurians.

The Jewish Apostle's present conduct was an act of "dissimulation." He was belying his known convictions, publicly expressed and acted on for years. Paul's challenge assumes that his fellow-Apostle is acting insincerely. And this assumption is explained by the account furnished in the Acts of the Apostles respecting Peter's earlier relations with Gentile Christianity (ch. x. 1—xi. 18; xv. 6—11). The strength of Paul's case lay in the conscience of Peter himself. The conflict at Antioch, so often appealed to in proof of the rooted opposition between the two Apostles, in reality gives evidence to the contrary effect. Here the maxim strictly applies, *Exceptio probat regulam.*

Peter's lapse is quite intelligible. No man who figures in the New Testament is better known to us. Honest, impulsive, ready of speech, full of contagious enthusiasm, brave as a lion, firm as a rock against open enemies, he possessed in a high degree the qualities which mark out a leader of men. He was of the stuff of which Christ makes His missionary heroes. But there was a strain of weakness in Peter's nature. He was *pliable*. He was too much at the mercy of surroundings. His denial of Jesus set this native fault in a light terribly vivid and humiliating. It was an act of "dissimulation." In his soul there was a fervent love to Christ. His zeal had brought him to the place of danger. But for the moment he was alone. Public opinion was all against him. A panic fear seized his brave heart. He forgot himself; he denied the Master whom he loved more than life. His courage had failed; never his faith. "Turned back again" from his coward flight, Peter had indeed "strengthened his brethren" (Luke xxii. 31, 32). He proved a tower of strength to the infant Church, worthy of his cognomen of the *rock*. For more than twenty years he had stood unshaken. No name was so honoured in the Church as Peter's. For Paul to be compared to him was the highest possible distinction.

And yet, after all this lapse of time, and in the midst of so glorious a career, the old, miserable weakness betrays him once more. How admonitory is the lesson! The sore long since healed over, the infirmity of nature out of which we seemed to have been completely trained, may yet break out again, to our shame and undoing. Had Peter for a moment forgotten the sorrowful warning of Gethsemane? Be it ours to "watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation."

We have reason to believe that, if Peter rashly erred, he freely acknowledged his error, and honoured his reprover. Both the Epistles that bear his name, in different ways, testify to the high value which their author set upon the teaching of "our beloved brother Paul." Tradition places the two men at Rome side by side in their last days; as though even in their death these glorious Apostles should not be divided, despite the attempts of faction and mistrust to separate them.

Few incidents exhibit more strongly than this the grievous consequences that may ensue from a seemingly trivial moral error. It looked a little thing that Peter should prefer to take his meals away from Gentile company. And yet, as Paul tells him, his withdrawal was a virtual rejection of the Gospel, and imperilled the most vital interests of Christianity. By this act the Jewish Apostle gave a handle to the adversaries of the Church which they have used for generations and for ages afterwards. The dispute which it occasioned could never be forgotten. In the second century it still drew down on Paul the bitter reproaches of the Judaizing faction. And in our own day the rationalistic critics have been able to turn it to marvellous account. It supplies the corner-stone of their "scientific reconstruction" of Biblical theology. The entire theory of Baur is evolved out of Peter's blunder. Let it be granted that Peter in yielding to the "certain from James" followed his genuine convictions and the tradition of Jewish Christianity, and we see at once how deep a gulf lay between Paul and the Primitive Church. All that Paul argues in the subsequent discussion only tends, in this case, to make the breach more visible. This false step of Peter is the thing that chiefly lends a colour to the theory in question, with all the

far-reaching consequences touching the origin and import of Christianity, which it involves. So long "the evil that men do lives after them"!

Paul's rebuke of his brother Apostle extends to the conclusion of the chapter. Some interpreters cut it short at the end of ver. 14; others at ver. 16; others again at ver. 18. But the address is consecutive and germane to the occasion throughout. Paul does not, to be sure, give a verbatim report, but the substance of what he said, and in a form suited to his readers. The narrative is an admirable prelude to the argument of chap. iii. It forms the transition from the historical to the polemical part of the Epistle, from the Apostle's personal to his doctrinal apology. The condensed form of the speech makes its interpretation difficult and much contested. We shall in the remainder of this Chapter trace the general course of Paul's reproof, proposing in the following Chapter to deal more fully with its doctrinal contents.

I. In the first place, *Paul taxes the Jewish Apostle with insincerity and unfaithfulness toward the gospel.* "I saw," he says, "that they were not holding a straight course, according to the truth of the gospel."

It is a *moral*, not a doctrinal aberration, that Paul lays at the door of Cephas and Barnabas. They did not hold a different creed from himself; they were disloyal to the common creed. They swerved from the path of rectitude in which they had walked hitherto. They had regard no longer to "the truth of the gospel"—the supreme consideration of the servant of Christ—but to the favour of men, to the public opinion of Jerusalem. "What will be said of us *there?*" they whispered to each other, "if these messengers of James report that we are discarding the sacred customs, and

making no difference between Jew and Gentile? We shall alienate our Judean brethren. We shall bring a scandal on the Christian cause in the eyes of Judaism."

This withdrawal of the Jews from the common fellowship at Antioch was a public matter. It was an injury to the whole Gentile-Christian community. If the reproof was to be salutary, it must be equally public and explicit. The offence was notorious. Every one deplored it, except those who shared it, or profited by it. Cephas "stood condemned." And yet his influence and the reverence felt toward him were so great, that no one dared to put this condemnation into words. His sanction was of itself enough to give to this sudden recrudescence of Jewish bigotry the force of authoritative usage. "The truth of the gospel" was again in jeopardy. Once more Paul's intervention foiled the attempts of the Judaizers and saved Gentile liberties. And this time he stood quite alone. Even the faithful Barnabas deserted him. But what mattered that, if Christ and truth were on his side? *Amicus Cephas, amicus Barnabas; sed magis amicus Veritas.* Solitary amid the circle of opposing or dissembling Jews, Paul "withstood" the chief of the Apostles of Jesus "to the face." He rebuked him "before them all."

II. Peter's conduct is reproved by Paul *in the light of their common knowledge of salvation in Christ.*

Paul is not content with pointing out the inconsistency of his brother Apostle. He must probe the matter to the bottom. He will bring Peter's delinquency to the touchstone of the Gospel, in its fundamental principles. So he passes in ver. 15 from the outward to the inward, from the circumstances of Peter's conduct to the inner world of spiritual consciousness, in

which his offence finds its deeper condemnation. "You and I," he goes on to say, "not Gentile sinners, but men of Jewish birth—yet for all that, knowing that there is no justification for man in works of law, only * through faith in Christ—we too put our faith in Christ, in order to be justified by faith in Him, not by works of law; for as Scripture taught us, in that way no flesh will be justified."

Paul makes no doubt that the Jewish Apostle's experience of salvation corresponded with his own. Doubtless, in their previous intercourse, and especially when he first "made acquaintance with Cephas" (ch. i. 18) in Jerusalem, the hearts of the two men had been opened to each other; and they had found that, although brought to the knowledge of the truth in different ways, yet in the essence of the matter—in respect of the personal conviction of sin, in the yielding up of self-righteousness and native pride, in the abandonment of every prop and trust but Jesus Christ—their history had run the same course, and face answered to face. Yes, Paul knew that he had an ally in the heart of his friend. He was not fighting as one that beateth the air, not making a rhetorical flourish, or a parade of some favourite doctrine of his own; he appealed from Peter dissembling to Peter faithful and consistent. Peter's dissimulation was a return to the Judaic ground of legal righteousness. By refusing to eat with uncircumcised men, he affirmed implicitly that, though believers in Christ, they were still to him "common and unclean," that the Mosaic rites imparted a higher sanctity than the righteousness of faith. Now the

* ἐὰν μὴ has the same partially exceptive force as εἰ μὴ in ch. i. 7, 19. Comp. Rom. xiv. 14; also Luke iv. 26, 27.

principles of evangelical and legal righteousness, of salvation by faith and by law-works, are diametrically opposed. It is logically impossible to maintain both. Peter had long ago accepted the former doctrine. He had sought salvation, just like any Gentile sinner, on the common ground of human guilt, and with a faith that renounced every consideration of Jewish privilege and legal performance. By what right can any Hebrew believer in Christ, after this, set himself above his Gentile brother, or presume to be by virtue of his circumcision and ritual law-keeping a holier man? Such we take to be the import of Paul's challenge in vv. 15, 16.

III. Paul is met at this point by the stock objection to the doctrine of salvation by faith—an objection brought forward in the dispute at Antioch not, we should imagine, by Peter himself, but by the Judaistic advocates. *To renounce legal righteousness was in effect,* they urged, *to promote sin—nay, to make Christ Himself a minister of sin* (ver. 17).

Paul retorts the charge on those who make it. *They promote sin,* he declares, *who set up legal righteousness again* (ver. 18). The objection is stated and met in the form of question and answer, as in Rom. iii. 5. We have in this sharp thrust and parry an example of the sort of fence which Paul must often have carried on in his discussions with Jewish opponents on these questions.

We must not overlook the close verbal connection of these verses with the two last. The phrase "seeking to be justified in Christ" carries us back to the time when the two Apostles, self-condemned sinners, severally sought and found a new ground of righteousness in Him. Now when Peter and Paul did this,

they were "themselves also found * to be sinners,"—an experience how abasing to their Jewish pride! They made the great discovery that stripped them of legal merit, and brought them down in their own esteem to the level of common sinners. Peter's confession may stand for both, when he said, abashed by the glory of Christ, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Now this style of penitence, this profound self-abasement in the presence of Jesus Christ, revolted the Jewish moralist. To Pharisaic sentiment it was contemptible. If justification by faith requires this, if it brings the Jew to so abject a posture and makes no difference between lawless and law-keeping, between pious children of Abraham and heathen outcasts —if this be the doctrine of Christ, all moral distinctions are confounded, and Christ is "a minister of sin!" This teaching robs the Jew of the righteousness he before possessed; it takes from him the benefit and honour that God bestowed upon his race! So, we doubt not, many a Jew was heard angrily exclaiming against the Pauline doctrine, both at Antioch and elsewhere. This conclusion was, in the view of the Legalist, a *reductio ad absurdum* of Paulinism.

The Apostle repels this inference with the indignant *μὴ γένοιτο, Far be it!* His reply is indicated by the very form in which he puts the question: "If we were *found* sinners" (Christ did not *make* us such). "The complaint was this," as Calvin finely says: "Has Christ therefore come to take away from us the righteousness of the Law, to make us polluted who were holy? Nay, Paul says;—he repels the blasphemy with

* For this emphatic *found*, describing a process of moral conviction and inward discovery, comp. Rom. vii. 10, 18, 21; the whole passage strikingly illustrates the reminiscence of our text.

detestation. For Christ did not introduce sin, but revealed it. He did not rob them of righteousness, but of the false show thereof." * The reproach of the Judaizers was in reality the same that is urged against evangelical doctrine still—that it is *immoral*, placing the virtuous and vicious in the common category of "sinners."

Ver. 18 throws back the charge of promoting sin upon the Legalist. It is the counterpart, not of ver. 19, but rather of ver. 17. The "transgressor" is the sinner in a heightened and more specific sense, one who breaks known and admitted law. † This word bears, in Paul's vocabulary, a precise and strongly marked signification which is not satisfied by the common interpretation. It is not that Peter in setting up the Law which he had in principle overthrown, *puts himself in the wrong;* nor that Peter in re-establishing the Law, *contradicts the purpose of the Law itself* (Chrysostom, Lightfoot, Beet). This is to anticipate the next verse. In Paul's view and according to the experience common to Peter with himself, law and transgression are concomitant, every man "under law" is *ipso facto* a transgressor. He who sets up the first, constitutes himself the second. And this is what Peter is now doing; although Paul courteously veils the fact by putting it hypothetically, in the first person. ‡ After dissolving, so far as in him lay, the validity of legal righteousness and breaking down the edifice of justification by works, Peter is now building it up

* *Commentarii, in loc.*

† See Grimm's *Lexicon*, or Trench's *N. T. Synonyms*, on this word. Comp. ch. iii. 19; Rom. ii. 23—27; iv. 15; v. 14.

‡ The *I* of this sentence is quite indefinite. On the other haud ver. 19, with its emphatic ἐγὼ γάρ, brings us into a new vein of thought.

again, and thereby constructing a prison-house for himself. *Returning to legal allegiance, he returns to legal condemnation;* * with his own hands he puts on his neck the burden of the Law's curse, which through faith in Christ he had cast off. By this act of timid conformity he seeks to commend himself to Jewish opinion; but it only serves, in the light of the Gospel, to "prove him a transgressor," to "commend" † him in that unhappy character. This is Paul's retort to the imputation of the Judaist. It carries the war into the enemies' camp. "No," says Paul, "*Christ* is no patron of sin, in bidding men renounce legal righteousness. But those promote sin—in themselves first of all—who after knowing His righteousness, turn back again to legalism."

IV. The conviction of Peter is now complete. From the sad bondage to which the Jewish Apostle, by his compliance with the Judaizers, was preparing to submit himself, *the Apostle turns to his own joyous sense of deliverance* (vv. 19—21). Those who resort to legalism, he has said, ensure their own condemnation. It is, on the other hand, by an entire surrender to Christ, by realizing the import of His death, that we learn to "live unto God." So Paul had proved it. At this moment he is conscious of a union with the crucified and living Saviour, which lifts him above the curse of the law, above the power of sin. To revert to the Judaistic state, to dream any more of earning righteousness by legal conformity, is a thing for him inconceivable. It would be to make void the cross of Christ!

And it was the Law itself that first impelled Paul

* Comp. ch. iii. 10—12, 19; Rom. iii. 20; iv. 15.

† This verb has, as Schott suggests, a tinge of irony.

along this path. "Through law" he "died to law." The Law drove him from itself to seek salvation in Jesus Christ. Its accusations allowed him no shelter, left him no secure spot on which to build the edifice of his self-righteousness. It said to him unceasingly, Thou art a transgressor.* He who seeks justification by its means contradicts the Law, while he frustrates the grace of God.

* Rom. vii. 7—viii. 1.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRINCIPLES AT STAKE.

"For I through law died unto law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *that* live, but Christ liveth in me: and that *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, *the faith* which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me. I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through law, then Christ died for nought"—GAL. ii. 19—21.

PAUL'S personal apology is ended. He has proved his Apostolic independence, and made good his declaration, "My Gospel is not according to man." If he owed his commission to any man, it was to Peter; so his traducers persistently alleged. He has shown that, first *without* Peter, then *in equality with* Peter, and finally *in spite of* Peter, he had received and maintained it. Similarly in regard to James and the Jerusalem Church. Without their mediation Paul commenced his work; when that work was challenged, they could only approve it; and when afterwards men professing to act in their name disturbed his work, the Apostle had repelled them. He acted all along under the consciousness of a trust in the gospel committed to him directly by Jesus Christ, and an authority in its administration second to none upon earth. And events had justified this confidence.

Paul is compelled to say all this about himself. The vindication of his ministry is forced from him by the calumnies of false brethren. From the time of the conference at Jerusalem, and still more since he withstood Peter at Antioch, he had been a mark for the hatred of the Judaizing faction. He was the chief obstacle to their success. Twice he had foiled them, when they counted upon victory. They had now set on foot a systematic agitation against him, with its head-quarters at Jerusalem, carried on under some pretext of sanction from the authorities of the Church there. At Corinth and in Galatia the legalist emissaries had appeared simultaneously; they pursued in the main the same policy, adapting it to the character and disposition of the two Churches, and appealing with no little success to the Jewish predilections common even amongst Gentile believers in Christ.

In this controversy Paul and the gospel he preached were bound together. "I am set," he says, "for the defence of the gospel" (Ph. i. 16). He was the champion of the cross, the impersonation of the principle of salvation by faith. It is "the gospel of Christ," the "truth of the gospel," he reiterates, that is at stake. If he wards off blows falling upon him, it is because they are aimed through him at the truth for which he lives—nay, at Christ who lives in him. In his self-assertion there is no note of pride or personal anxiety. Never was there a man more completely lost in the greatness of a great cause, nor who felt himself in comparison with it more worthless. But that cause has lifted Paul with it to imperishable glory. Of all names named on earth, none stands nearer than his to that which is "above every name."

While Paul in ch. i. and ii. is busy with his own

vindication, he is meantime behind the personal defence preparing the doctrinal argument. His address to Peter is an incisive outline of the gospel of grace. The three closing verses—the *Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι* in particular—are the heart of Paul's theology—*summa ac medulla Christianismi* (Bengel). Such a testimony was the Apostle's best defence before his audience at Antioch; it was the surest means of touching the heart of Peter and convincing him of his error. And its recital was admirably calculated to enlighten the Galatians as to the true bearing of this dispute which had been so much misrepresented. From ver. 15 onwards, Paul has been all the while addressing, under the person of Peter, the conscience of his readers,* and paving the way for the assault that he makes upon them with so much vigour in the first verses of ch. iii. Read in the light of the foregoing narrative, this passage is a compendium of the Pauline Gospel, invested with the peculiar interest that belongs to a confession of personal faith, made at a signal crisis in the author's life. Let us examine this momentous declaration.

I. At the foundation of Paul's theology lies his conception of *the grace of God.*

GRACE is the Apostle's watchword. The word occurs twice as often in his Epistles as it does in the rest of the New Testament. Outside the Pauline Luke and Hebrews, and 1 Peter with its large infusion of Paulinism, it is exceedingly rare.† In this word the character, spirit, and aim of the revelation of Christ, as Paul

* Hofmann is so far right when he makes the Apostle turn to the Galatians in ch. ii. 15, and draws at this point the line between the historical and doctrinal sections of the Epistle.

† What is said of *χάρις*, applies also to its derivatives, *χαρίζομαι*, *κ.τ.λ.*

understood it, are summed up. "The grace of God" is the touchstone to which Peter's dissimulation is finally brought. *Christ* is the embodiment of Divine grace—above all, in His death. So that it is one and the same thing to "bring to nought the grace of God," and "the death of Christ." Hence God's grace is called "the grace of Christ,"—"of our Lord Jesus Christ." From Romans to Titus and Philemon, "grace reigns" in every Epistle. No one can counterfeit this mark of Paul, or speak of grace in his style and accent.

God's grace is not His love alone; it is *redeeming love*—love poured out upon the undeserving, love coming to seek and save the lost, "bringing salvation to all men" (Rom. v. 1—8; Tit. ii. 11). Grace decreed redemption, made the sacrifice, proclaims the reconciliation, provides and bestows the new sonship of the Spirit, and schools its children into all the habits of godliness and virtue that beseem their regenerate life, which it brings finally to its consummation in the life eternal.*

Grace in God is therefore the antithesis of *sin in man*, counterworking and finally triumphing over it. Grace belongs to the last Adam as eminently as sin to the first. The later thoughts of the Apostle on this theme are expressed in Tit. iii. 4—7, a passage singularly rich in its description of the working of Divine grace on human nature. "We were senseless," he says, "disobedient, wandering in error, in bondage to lusts and pleasures of many kinds, living in envy and malice, hateful, hating each other. But when the kindness and love to man of our Saviour God shone forth,"—then all was changed: "not by works wrought in our

* Eph. i. 5—9; 2 Tim. i. 9; Rom. iii. 24; Heb. ii. 9; 2 Cor. v. 20—vi. 1; Gal. iv. 5; Tit. iii. 5—7; ii. 11—14; Rom. v. 21.

own righteousness, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, that, justified by His grace, we might be made heirs in hope of life eternal." The vision of the grace of God drives stubbornness, lust, and hatred from the soul. It brings about, for man and for society, the *palingenesia*, the new birth of Creation, rolling back the tide of evil and restoring the golden age of peace and innocence; and crowns the joy of a renovated earth with the glories of a recovered heaven.

Being the antagonist of sin, grace comes of necessity into contrast with *the law*. Law is intrinsically the opposer of sin; sin is "lawlessness," with Paul as much as with John.* But law was powerless to cope with sin: it was "weak through the flesh." Instead of crushing sin, the interposition of law served to inflame and stimulate it, to bring into play its latent energy, reducing the man most loyally disposed to moral despair. "By the law therefore is the knowledge of sin; it worketh out wrath." Inevitably, it makes men transgressors; it brings upon them an inward condemnation, a crushing sense of the Divine anger and hostility.† That is all that law can do by itself. "Holy and just and good," notwithstanding, to our perverse nature it becomes *death* (Rom. vii. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 56). It is actually "the strength of sin," lending itself to extend and confirm its power. We find in it a "law of sin and death." So that to be "under law" and "under grace" are two opposite and mutually exclusive states. In the latter condition only is sin "no longer our lord" (Rom. vi. 14). Peter and the Jews of Antioch therefore, in building up the legal principle

* Rom. vii. 12, 14; 2 Thess. ii. 4—8; comp. 1 John iii. 4.

† Rom. iii. 20; iv. 15; v. 20; vii. 5, 24; Gal. ii. 16 iii. 10, 11, 19.

again, were in truth "abolishing the grace of God." If the Galatians follow their example, Paul warns them that they will "fall from grace." Accepting circumcision, they become "debtors to perform the whole law,"—and that means transgression and the curse (ch. v. 1—4; iii. 10—12; ii. 16—18).

While sin is the reply which man's nature makes to the demands of law, *faith* is the response elicited by grace; it is the door of the heart opening to grace.* Grace and Faith go hand in hand, as Law and Transgression. Limiting the domain of faith, Peter virtually denied the sovereignty of grace. He belied his confession made at the Council of Jerusalem: "By *the grace* of the Lord Jesus we *trust* to be saved, even as the Gentiles" (Acts xv. 11). With Law are joined such terms as Works, Debt, Reward, Glorying, proper to a "righteousness of one's own."† With Grace we associate Gift, Promise, Predestination, Call, Election, Adoption, Inheritance, belonging to the dialect of "the righteousness which is of God by faith." ‡ Grace operates in the region of "the Spirit," making for freedom; but law, however spiritual in origin, has come to seek its accomplishment in the sphere of the flesh, where it "gendereth to bondage" (ch. iv. 23—v. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 6, 17).

Grace appears, however, in another class of passages in Paul's Epistles, of which ch. i. 15, ii. 9 are examples. To the Divine grace Paul ascribes *his personal salvation and Apostolic call.* The revelation which made him a Christian and an Apostle, was above

* Rom. iii. 24, 25; Eph. ii. 8; etc.

† Rom iv. 1—4; xi. 6; Gal ii. 16; iii. 12.

‡ Rom. iv. 16; viii. 28—39; xi. 5; Eph. i. 4—6; Tit. iii. 7; Acts xx. 32; Gal. iii. 18: δι' ἐπαγγελίας κεχάρισται ὁ Θεός.

all things a manifestation of grace. Wearing this aspect, "the glory of God" appeared to him "in the face of Jesus Christ." The splendour that blinded and overwhelmed Saul on his way to Damascus, was "the glory of His grace." The voice of Jesus that fell on the persecutor's ear spoke in the accents of grace. No scourge of the Law, no thunders of Sinai, could have smitten down the proud Pharisee, and beaten or scorched out of him his strong self-will, like the complaint of Jesus. All the circumstances tended to stamp upon his soul, fused into penitence in that hour, the ineffaceable impression of "the grace of God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ." Such confessions as those of 1 Cor. xv. 8—10, and Eph. ii. 7, iii. 7, 8, show how constantly this remembrance was present with the Apostle Paul and suffused his views of revelation, giving to his ministry its peculiar tenderness of humility and ardour of gratitude. This sentiment of boundless obligation to the grace of God, with its pervasive effect upon the Pauline doctrine, is strikingly expressed in the doxology of 1 Tim. i. 11—17,—words which it is almost a sacrilege to put into the mouth of a *falsarius*: "According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, wherewith *I* was intrusted, . . . who was aforetime a blasphemer and persecutor. . . But the grace of our Lord abounded even more exceedingly. Faithful is the saying, worthy to be received of all, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'—of whom *I* am chief. . . . In me as chief Christ Jesus showed forth all His long-suffering. . . Now to the King of the ages be honour and glory for ever. Amen." Who, reading the Apostle's story, does not echo that *Amen?* No wonder that Paul became the Apostle of *grace;* even as John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," must per-

force be the Apostle of *love*. First to him was God's grace revealed in its largest affluence, that through him it might be known to all men and to all ages.

II. Side by side with the grace of God, we find in ver. 21 *the death of Christ*. He sets aside the former, the Apostle argues, who by admitting legal righteousness nullifies the latter.

While grace embodies Paul's fundamental conception of the Divine character, the death of Christ is the fundamental fact in which that character manifests itself. So the cross becomes the centre of Paul's theology. But it was, in the first place, the basis of his personal life. "Faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me," is the foundation of "the life he now lives in the flesh."

Here lay the stumbling-block of Judaism. Theocratic pride, Pharisaic tradition, could not, as we say, *get over* it. A crucified Messiah! How revolting the bare idea. But when, as in Paul's case, Judaistic pride did surmount this huge scandal and in spite of the offence of the cross arrive at faith in Jesus, it was at the cost of a severe fall. It was broken in pieces,—destroyed once and for ever. With the elder Apostles the change had been more gradual; they were never steeped in Judaism as Saul was. For him to accept the faith of Jesus was a revolution the most complete and drastic possible. As a Judaist, the preaching of the cross was an outrage on his faith and his Messianic hopes; now it was that which most of all subdued and entranced him. Its power was extreme, whether to attract or repel. The more he had loathed and mocked at it before, the more he is bound henceforth to exalt the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. A proof of the Divine anger against the Nazarene he had once deemed

it; now he sees in it the token of God's grace in Him to the whole world.

For Paul therefore the death of Christ imported the end of Judaism. "I died to law," he writes,—"I am crucified with Christ." Once understanding what this death meant, and realising his own relation to it, on every account it was impossible to go back to Legalism. The cross barred all return. The law that put Him, the sinless One, to death, could give no life to sinful men. The Judaism that pronounced His doom, doomed itself. Who would make peace with it over the Saviour's blood? From the moment that Paul knew the truth about the death of Jesus, he had done with Judaism for ever. Henceforth he knew nothing—cherished no belief or sentiment, acknowledged no maxim, no tradition, which did not conform itself to His death. The world to which he had belonged *died*, self-slain, when it slew Him. From Christ's grave a new world was rising, for which alone Paul lived.

But why should the grace of God take expression in a fact so appalling as Christ's death? What has *death* to do with grace? It is the legal penalty of sin. The conjunction of sin and death pervades the teaching of Scripture, and is a principle fixed in the conscience of mankind. Death, as man knows it, is the inevitable consequence and the universal witness of his transgression. He "carries about in his mortality the testimony that God is angry with the wicked every day" (Augustine). The death of Jesus Christ cannot be taken out of this category. He died a sinner's death. He bore the penalty of guilt. The prophetic antecedents of Calvary, the train of circumstances connected with it, His own explanations in chief—are

all in keeping with this purpose. With amazement we behold the Sinless "made sin," the Just dying for the unjust. He was "born of a woman, born under law": under law He lived—and *died*. Grace is no law-breaker. God must above all things be "just Himself," if He is to justify others (Rom. iii. 26). The death of Jesus declares it. That sublime sacrifice is, as one might say, the *resultant* of grace and law. Grace "gives Him up for us all;" it meets the law's claims in Him, even to the extreme penalty, that from us the penalty may be lifted off. He puts Himself under law, in order "to *buy out* those under law" (ch. iv. 4, 5). In virtue of the death of Christ, therefore, men are dealt with on an extra-legal footing, on terms of grace; not because law is ignored or has broken down; but because it is satisfied beforehand. God has "set forth Christ Jesus a propitiation"; and in view of that accomplished fact, He proceeds "in the present time" to "justify him who is of faith in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 22—26). Legalism is at an end, for the Law has spent itself on our Redeemer. For those that are in Him "there is now no condemnation." This is to anticipate the fuller teaching of ch. iii.; but the vicarious sacrifice is already implied when Paul says, "He gave Himself up for me —gave Himself for our sins" (ch. i. 4).

The resurrection of Christ is, in Paul's thought, the other side of His death. They constitute one event, the obverse and reverse of the same reality. For Paul, as for the first Apostles, the resurrection of Jesus gave to His death an aspect wholly different from that it previously wore. But the transformation wrought in their minds during the "forty days," in his case came about in a single moment, and began from a different starting-point. Instead of being the merited punish-

ment of a blasphemer and false Messiah, the death of Calvary became the glorious self-sacrifice of the Son of God. The dying and rising of Jesus were blended in the Apostle's mind; he always sees the one in the light of the other. The faith that saves, as he formulates it, is at once a faith that Christ died for our sins, and that God raised Him from the dead on the third day.* Whichever of the two one may first apprehend, it brings the other along with it. The resurrection is not an express topic of this Epistle. Nevertheless it meets us in its first sentence, where we discern that Paul's knowledge of the gospel and his call to proclaim it, rested upon this fact. In the passage before us the resurrection is manifestly assumed. If the Apostle is "crucified with Christ,"—and yet "Christ *lives* in him," it is not simply the teaching, or the mission of Jesus that lives over again in Paul; the *life* of the risen Saviour has itself entered into his soul.

III. This brings us to the thought of *the union of the believer with Christ in death and life*, which is expressed in terms of peculiar emphasis and distinctness in ver. 20. "With Christ I have been crucified; and *I* live no longer; it is Christ that lives in me. My earthly life is governed by faith in Him who loved me and died for me." Christ and Paul are one. When Christ died, Paul's former self died with Him. Now it is the Spirit of Christ in heaven that lives within Paul's body here on earth.

This union is first of all *a communion with the dying Saviour*. Paul does not think of the sacrifice of Calvary as something merely accomplished *for* him, outside himself, by a legal arrangement in which one person

* 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4, 11; Rom. iv. 24, 25; x. 9; 1 Thess. iv. 14.

takes the place of another and, as it were, *personates* him. The nexus between Christ and Paul is deeper than this. Christ is the centre and soul of the race, holding towards it a spiritual primacy of which Adam's natural headship was a type, mediating between men and God in all the relations which mankind holds to God.* The death of Jesus was more than substitutionary; it was representative. He had every right to act for us. He was the "One" who alone could "die for all;" in Him "all died" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). He carried us with Him to the cross; His death was in effect the death of those who sins He bore. There was no legal fiction here; no federal compact extemporised for the occasion. "The second Man from heaven," if second in order of time, was first and fundamental in the spiritual order, the organic Head of mankind, "the root," as well as "the offspring" of humanity.† The judgement that fell upon the race was a summons to Him who held in His hands its interests and destinies. Paul's faith apprehends and endorses what Christ has done on his behalf,—"who loved me," he cries, "and gave Himself up *for me*." When the Apostle says, "I *have been* crucified with Christ," he goes back in thought to the scene of Calvary; there, potentially, all that was done of which he now realises in himself the issue. His present salvation is, so to speak, a *rehearsal* of the Saviour's death, a "likeness" (Rom. vi. 5) of the supreme act of atonement, which took place once for all when Christ died for our sins.

Faith is the link between the past, objective sacrifice, and the present, subjective apprehension of it, by which

* Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45—48; 1 Tim. ii. 5.

† 1 Cor. xv. 45—49; comp. Col. i. 15—17; John i. 4, 9, 15, 16.

its virtue becomes our own. Without such faith, Christ would have "died in vain." His death must then have been a great sacrifice thrown away. Wilful unbelief repudiates what the Redeemer has done, provisionally, on our behalf. This repudiation, as individuals, we are perfectly free to make. "The objective reconciliation effected in Christ's death can after all benefit actually, in their own personal consciousness, only those who know and acknowledge it, and feel themselves in their solidarity with Christ to be so much one with Him as to be able to appropriate inwardly His death and celestial life, and to live over again His life and death; those only, in a word, who truly *believe* in Christ. Thus the idea of substitution in Paul receives its complement and realisation in the mysticism of his conception of faith. While Christ objectively represents the whole race, that relation becomes a subjective reality only in the case of those who connect themselves with Him in faith in such a way as to fuse together with Him into *one* spirit and *one* body, as to find in Him their Head, their soul, their life and self, and He in them His body, His members and His temple. Thereby the idea of 'one for all' receives the stricter meaning of 'all in and with one.'"*

Partaking the death of Christ, Paul has come to share in *His risen life*. On the cross he owned his Saviour—owned His wounds, His shame, His agony of death, and felt himself therein shamed, wounded, slain to death. Thus joined to his Redeemer, as by the nails that fastened Him to the tree, Paul is carried

* Pfleiderer, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 65, 6. Dr. Pfleiderer's delicate and sympathetic interpretation of Paul's teaching (in these *Lectures*, and still more in his *Paulinism*) has made all students of the Apostle his debtors, however much they may quarrel with his historical criticism.

with Him down into the grave—into the grave, and out again! Christ is risen from the dead: so therefore is Paul. He "died to sin once," and now "liveth to God; death lords it over Him no more:" this Paul reckons equally true for himself (Rom. vi. 3—11). The *Ego*, the "old man" that Paul once was, lies buried in the grave of Jesus.

Jesus Christ alone, "the Lord of the Spirit" has risen from that sepulchre,—has risen in the spirit of Paul. "If any one should come to Paul's doors and ask, Who lives here? he would answer, Not Saul of Tarsus, but Jesus Christ lives in this body of mine." In this appropriation of the death and rising of the Lord Jesus, this interpenetration of the spirit of Paul and that of Christ, there are three stages corresponding to the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of Eastertide. "Christ died for our sins; He was buried; He rose again the third day:" so, by consequence, "I am crucified with Christ; no longer do I live; Christ liveth in me."

This mystic union of the soul and its Saviour bears fruit in the activities of outward life. Faith is no mere abstract and contemplative affection; but a working energy, dominating and directing all our human faculties. It makes even the flesh its instrument, which defied the law of God, and betrayed the man to the bondage of sin and death. There is a note of triumph in the words,—"the life I now live *in the flesh*, I live in faith!" The impossible has been accomplished. "The body of death" is possessed by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. vi. 12; vii. 23—viii. 1). The flesh—the despair of the law—has become the sanctified vessel of grace.

Paul's entire theology of Redemption is contained

in this mystery of union with Christ. The office of *the Holy Spirit*, whose communion holds together the glorified Lord and His members upon earth, is implied in the teaching of ver. 20. This is manifest, when in ch. iii. 2—5 we find the believer's union with Christ described as "receiving the Spirit, beginning in the Spirit;" and when a little later "the promise of the Spirit" embraces the essential blessings of the new life.* The doctrine of *the Church* is also here. For those in whom Christ dwells have therein a common life, which knows no "Jew and Greek; all are one man" in Him.† *Justification* and *sanctification* alike are here; the former being the realisation of our share in Christ's propitiation for sin, the latter our participation in His risen life, spent "to God." Finally, *the resurrection to eternal life* and *the heavenly glory* of the saints spring from their present fellowship with the Redeemer. "The Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, dwelling in us, shall raise our mortal body" to share with the perfected spirit His celestial life. The resurrection of Christ is the earnest of that which all His members will attain,—nay, the material creation is to participate in the glory of the sons of God, made like to Him, the "firstborn of many brethren" (Rom. viii. 11, 16—23, 29, 30; Phil. iii. 20, 21).

In all these vital truths Paul's gospel was traversed by the Legalism countenanced by Peter at Antioch. *The Judaistic doctrine struck* directly, if not avowedly, *at the cross*, whose reproach its promoters sought to escape. This charge is the climax of the Apostle's contention against Peter, and the starting-point of his expostula-

* Ch. iii. 14; iv. 6, 7; v. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 17, 19; Rom. viii. 9—16.
† Ch. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11; Rom. xv. 5—7.

tion with the Galatians in the following chapter. "If righteousness could be obtained by way of law, then Christ died for nought!" What could one say worse of any doctrine or policy, than that it led to this? And if works of law actually justify men, and circumcision is allowed to make a difference between Jew and Greek before God, the principle of legalism is admitted, and the intolerable consequence ensues which Paul denounces. What did Christ die for, if men are able to redeem themselves after this fashion? How can any one dare to build up in face of the cross his paltry edifice of self-wrought goodness, and say by doing so that the expiation of Calvary was superfluous and that Jesus Christ might have spared Himself all that trouble!

And so, on the one hand, Legalism *impugns the grace of God.* It puts human relations to God on the footing of a debtor and creditor account; it claims for man a ground for boasting in himself (Rom. iv. 1—4), and takes from God the glory of His grace. In its devotion to statute and ordinance, it misses the soul of obedience—the love of God, only to be awakened by the knowledge of His love to us (ch. v. 14; 1 John iv. 7—11). It sacrifices the Father in God to the King. It forgets that trust is the first duty of a rational creature toward his Maker, that the law of faith lies at the basis of all law for man.

On the other hand, and by the same necessity, Legalism is *fatal to the spiritual life in man.* Whilst it clouds the Divine character, it dwarfs and petrifies the human. What becomes of the sublime mystery of the life hid with Christ in God, if its existence is made contingent on circumcision and ritual performance? To men who put "meat and drink" on a level with "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,"

or in their intercourse with fellow-Christians set points of ceremony above justice, mercy, and faith, the very idea of a spiritual kingdom of God is wanting. The religion of Jesus and of Paul regenerates the heart, and from that centre regulates and hallows the whole ongoing of life. Legalism guards the mouth, the hands, the senses, and imagines that through these it can drill the man into the Divine order. The latter theory makes religion a mechanical system; the former conceives it as an inward, organic life.

THE DOCTRINAL POLEMIC.

CHAP. iii. 1—v. 12.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GALATIAN FOLLY.

"O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified? This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh? Did ye suffer so many things in vain? if it be indeed in vain. He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"—GAL. iii. 1—5.

AT the beginning of ch. iii. falls the most marked division of this Epistle. So far, since the exordium, its course has been strictly narrative. The Apostle has been "giving" his readers "to know" many things concerning himself and his relations to the Judean Church of which they had been ignorant or misinformed. Now this preliminary task is over. From explanation and defence he passes suddenly to the attack. He turns sharply round upon the Galatians, and begins to ply them with expostulation and argument. It is for their sake that Paul has been telling this story of his past career. In the light of the narration just concluded, they will be able to see their folly and to understand how much they have been deceived.

Here also the indignation so powerfully expressed in the Introduction, breaks forth again, directed this

time, however, against the Galatians themselves and breathing grief more than anger. And just as after that former outburst the letter settled down into the sober flow of narrative, so from these words of reproach Paul passes on to the measured course of argument which he pursues through the next two chapters. In ch. iv. 8—20, and again in ch. v. 1—12, doctrine gives way to appeal and warning. But these paragraphs still belong to the polemical division of the Epistle, extending from this point to the middle of ch. v. This section forms the central and principal part of the letter, and is complete in itself. Its last words, in ch. v. 6—12, will bring us round to the position from which we are now setting out.

This chapter stands, nevertheless, in close connection of thought with the foregoing. The Apostle's doctrine is grounded in historical fact and personal experience. The theological argument has behind it the weight of his proved Apostleship. The Judaistic dispute at Antioch, in particular, bears immediately on the subject-matter of the third chapter. Peter's vacillation had its counterpart in the defection of the Galatians. The reproof and refutation which the elder Apostle brought upon himself, Paul's readers must have felt, touched them very nearly. In the crafty intriguers who made mischief at Antioch, they could see the image of the Judaists who had come into their midst. Above all, it was *the cross* which Cephas had dishonoured, whose efficacy he had virtually denied. His act of dissimulation, pushed to its issue, nullified the death of Christ. This is the gravamen of Paul's impeachment. And it is the foundation of all his complaints against the Galatians. Round this centre the conflict is waged. By its tendency to enhance or diminish the glory of

the Saviour's cross, Paul judges of the truth of every teaching, the worth of every policy. Angel or Apostle, it matters not—whoever disparages the cross of Jesus Christ finds in Paul an unflinching enemy. The thought of Christ "dying in vain" rouses in him the strong emotion under which he indites the first verses of this chapter. What greater folly, what stranger bewitchment can there be, than for one who has seen "Jesus Christ crucified" to turn away to some other spectacle, to seek elsewhere a more potent and diviner charm! "O senseless Galatians!"

I. Here then was the beginning of their folly. *The Galatians forgot their Saviour's cross.*

This was the first step in their backsliding. Had their eyes continued to be fixed on Calvary, the Legalists would have argued and cajoled in vain. Let the cross of Christ once lose its spell for us, let its influence fail to hold and rule the soul, and we are at the mercy of every wind of doctrine. We are like sailors in a dark night on a perilous coast, who have lost sight of the lighthouse beacon. Our Christianity will go to pieces. If Christ crucified should cease to be its sovereign attraction, from that moment the Church is doomed.

This forgetfulness of the cross on the part of the Galatians is the more astonishing to Paul, because at first they had so vividly realised its power, and the scene of Calvary, as Paul depicted it,* had taken hold of their nature with extraordinary force. He was conscious at the time—so his words seem to intimate—

* The verb προεγράφη (*openly set forth*) probably means *painted up* rather than *placarded*. This more vivid meaning belongs to γράφω, and there is no sufficient reason why it should not attach to προ-γράφω. It is entirely in place here. "Jesus Christ crucified" is not an announcement to be made, but an object to be delineated.

that it was given him, amongst this susceptible people, to draw the picture with unwonted effect. The gaze of his hearers was rivetted upon the sight. It was as if the Lord Jesus hung there before their eyes. They beheld the Divine sufferer. They heard His cries of distress and of triumph. They felt the load which crushed Him. Nor was it their sympathies alone and their reverence, to which the spectacle appealed. It stirred their conscience to its depths. It awakened feelings of inward humiliation and contrition, of horror at the curse of sin, of anguish under the bitterness and blackness of its death. "It was *you*," Paul would say—"you and I, for whom He died. *Our* sins laid on Him that ignominy, those agonies of body and of spirit. He died the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." They looked, they listened, till their hearts were broken, till all their sins cried out against them; and in a passion of repentance they cast themselves before the Crucified, and took Him for their Christ and King. From the foot of the cross they rose new men, with heaven's light upon their brow, with the cry *Abba, Father* rising from their lips, with the Spirit of God and of Jesus Christ, the consciousness of a Divine sonship, filling their breast.

Has all this passed away? Have the Galatians forgotten the shame, the glory of that hour—the tears of penitence, the cries of joy and gratitude which the vision of the cross drew from their souls, the new creation it had wrought within them, the ardour of spirit and high resolve with which they pledged themselves to Christ's service? Was the influence of that transforming experience to prove no more enduring than the morning cloud and early dew? Foolish Galatians! Had they not the wit to see that the teaching of the

Legalists ran counter to all they had then experienced, that it "made the death of Christ of none effect," which had so mighty and saving an effect upon themselves? Were they "so senseless," so bereft of reason and recollection? The Apostle is amazed. He cannot understand how impressions so powerful should prove so transient, and that truths thus clearly perceived and realised should come to be forgotten. Some fatal spell has been cast over them. They are "bewitched" to act as they are doing. A deadly fascination, like that of the "evil eye," has paralyzed their minds.

The ancient belief alluded to in the word the Apostle uses here,* is not altogether a superstition. The malignity that darts out in the glance of the "evil eye" is a presage of mischief. Not without reason does it cause a shudder. It is the sign of a demonic jealousy and hate. "Satan has entered into" the soul which emits it, as once into Judas. Behind the spite of the Jewish false brethren Paul recognised a preternatural malice and cunning, like that with which "the Serpent beguiled Eve." † To this darker source of the fascination his question, "Who hath bewitched you?" appears to point.

II. Losing sight of the cross of Christ, the Galatians were furthermore *rejecting the Holy Spirit of God.*

This heavy reproach the Apostles urges upon his

* On *βασκαίνω* see the note in Lightfoot's Commentary *in loc.*; also Grimm's N. T. Lexicon. "The Scripture calleth envy an 'evil eye;' ... so there still seemeth to be acknowledged in the act of envy an ejaculation or irradiation of the eye. Envy hath in it something of witchcraft. ... It is the proper attribute of the Devil, who is called 'The envious man, that soweth tares among the wheat by night.'"—(Lord Bacon: *Essay* ix.)

† Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 1—4, a passage closely parallel to this context, containing what is expressed here and in Gal. i. 6, 7; iv. 11, 17, 18.

readers through the rest of the paragraph, pausing only for a moment in ver. 4 to recall their earlier sufferings for Christ's sake in further witness against them. "I have but one question to put to you," he says—"You received the Spirit: how did that come about? Was it through what you *did* according to law? or what you *heard* in faith? You know well that this great blessing was given to your *faith*. Can you expect to retain this gift of God on other terms than those on which you received it? Have you begun with the Spirit to be brought to perfection by the flesh? (ver. 3). . . . Nay, God still bestows on you His Spirit, with gifts of miraculous energy; and I ask again, whether these displays attend on the practice of law-works, or upon faith's hearing?" (ver. 5).

The Apostle wished the Galatians to test the competing doctrines by their effects. The Spirit of God had put His seal on the Apostle's teaching, and on the faith of his hearers. Did any such manifestation accompany the preaching of the Legalist? That is all he wants to know. His cause must stand or fall by "the demonstration of the Spirit." By "signs and wonders," and diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit, God was wont to "bear witness with" the ministers and witnesses of Jesus Christ (Heb. ii. 3, 4; 1 Cor. xii. 4—11): was this testimony on the side of Paul, or the Circumcisionists? Did it sustain the gospel of the grace of God, or the "other gospel" of Legalism?

"He, the Spirit of truth, shall testify of Me," Christ had said; and so John, at the end of the Apostolic age: "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." When the Galatians accepted the message of the cross proclaimed by Paul's lips, "the Holy Spirit fell" on them, as on the Jewish Church at

the Pentecost, and the Gentile believers in the house of Cornelius (Acts x. 44); "the love of God was poured out in their hearts through the Holy Ghost that was given them" (Rom v. 5). As a mighty, rushing wind this supernatural influence swept through their souls. Like fire from heaven it kindled in their spirit, consuming their lusts and vanities, and fusing their nature into a new, holy passion of love to Christ and to God the Father. It broke from their lips in ecstatic cries, unknown to human speech; or moved them to unutterable groans and pangs of intercession (Rom. viii. 26).

There were men in the Galatian Churches on whom the baptism of the Spirit conferred besides miraculous *charismata*, superhuman powers of insight and of healing. These gifts God continued to "minister amongst" them (*God* is unquestionably the agent in ver. 5). Paul asks them to observe on what conditions, and to whom, these extraordinary gifts are distributed. For the "receiving of the Spirit" was an infallible sign of true Christian faith. This was the very proof which in the first instance had convinced Peter and the Judean Church that it was God's will to save the Gentiles, independently of the Mosaic law (Acts xi. 15—18).

Receiving the Spirit, the Galatian believers knew that they were the sons of God. "God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying, *Abba, Father*" (ch. iv. 6, 7). When Paul speaks of "receiving the Spirit," it is this that he thinks of most of all. The miraculous phenomena attending His visitations were facts of vast importance; and their occurrence is one of the historical certainties of the Apostolic age. They were "signs," conspicuous, impressive, indispensable at the time—monuments set up for all time. But they were in their nature variable and temporary. There

are powers greater and more enduring than these. The things that "abide" are "faith, hope, love;" love chiefest of the three. Hence when the Apostle in a later chapter enumerates the qualities that go to make up "the fruit of the Spirit," he says nothing of *tongues* or *prophecies*, or *gifts of healing;* he begins with *love*. Wonder-working powers had their times and seasons, their peculiar organs; but every believer in Christ—whether Jew or Greek, primitive or mediæval or modern Christian, the heir of sixty generations of faith or the latest convert from heathenism—joins in the testimony, "The love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us." This mark of God's indwelling Spirit the Galatians had possessed. They were "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (ch. iii. 26). And with the filial title they had received the filial nature. They were "taught of God to love one another." Being sons of God in Christ, they were also "heirs" (ch. iv. 7; Rom viii. 17). They possessed the earnest of the heavenly inheritance (Eph. i. 14), the pledge of their bodily redemption (Rom. viii. 10—23), and of eternal life in the fellowship of Christ. In their initial experience of "the salvation which is in Jesus Christ" they had the foretaste of its "eternal glory," of the "grace" belonging to "them that love our Lord Jesus Christ," which is "in incorruption." *

No legal condition was laid down at this beginning of their Christian life; no "work" of any kind interposed between the belief of the heart and the conscious reception of the new life in Christ. Even their baptism, significant and memorable as it was, had not been required as in itself a precondition of salvation. Some-

* 2 Tim. ii. 10; Eph. vi. 24 (*ἀφθαρσία* is *incorruption* everywhere else in Paul: why not here?)

times after baptism, but often—as in the case of Cornelius' household—before the rite was administered, "the Holy Ghost fell" on believing souls (Acts x. 44—48; xi. 15, 16). They "confessed with their mouth the Lord Jesus;" they "believed in their hearts that God had raised Him from the dead,"—and they were saved. Baptism is, as Paul's teaching elsewhere shows,* the expression, not the medium—the symbol, and not the cause, of the new birth which it might precede or follow. The Catholic doctrine of the *opus operatum* in the sacraments is radically anti-Pauline; it is Judaism over again. The process by which the Galatians became Christians was essentially spiritual. They had begun *in the Spirit.*

And so they must continue. To begin in the Spirit, and then look for perfection to the flesh, to suppose that the work of faith and love was to be consummated by Pharisaic ordinances, that Moses could lead them higher than Christ, and circumcision effect for them what the power of the Holy Ghost failed to do—this was the height of unreason. "Are you so senseless?" the Apostle asks.

He dwells on this absurdity, pressing home his expostulation with an emphasis that shows he is touching the centre of the controversy between himself and the Judaizers. They admitted, as we have shown in Chapter IX., that Gentiles might *enter* the kingdom of God through faith and by the baptism of the Spirit. This was settled at the Council of Jerusalem. Without a formal acceptance of this evangelical principle, we do not see how the Legalists could again have found entrance into Gentile Christian Churches, much less have

* Ch. iii. 26, 27; Rom. vi. 2—4; Col. ii. 11—13; Tit. iii. 5.

carried Peter and Barnabas and the liberal Jews of Antioch with them, as they did. They no longer attempted to deny salvation to the uncircumcised; but they claimed for the circumcised a more complete salvation, and a higher status in the Church. "Yes, Paul has laid the foundation," they would say; "now we have come to perfect his work, to give you the more advanced instruction, derived from the fountain-head of Christian knowledge, from the first Apostles in Jerusalem. *If you would be perfect, keep the commandments;* be circumcised, like Christ and His disciples, and observe the law of Moses. If you be circumcised, Christ will profit you much more than hitherto; and you will inherit all the blessings promised in Him to the children of Abraham."

Such was the style of "persuasion" employed by the Judaizers. It was well calculated to deceive Jewish believers, even those best affected to their Gentile brethren. It appeared to maintain the prescriptive rights of Judaism and to satisfy legitimate national pride, without excluding the Gentiles from the fold of Christ. Nor is it difficult to understand the spell which the circumcisionist doctrine exerted over susceptible Gentile minds, after some years of Christian training, of familiarity with the Old Testament and the early history of Israel. Who is there that does not feel the charm of ancient memories and illustrious names? Many a noble mind is at this present time "bewitched," many a gifted and pious spirit is "carried away" by influences precisely similar. *Apostolical succession, patristic usage, catholic tradition, the authority of the Church* —what words of power are these! How wilful and arbitrary it appears to rely upon any present experience of the grace of God, upon one's own reading

of the gospel of Christ, in contradiction to claims advanced under the patronage of so many revered and time-honoured names. The man, or the community, must be deeply conscious of having "received the Spirit," that can feel the force of attractions of this nature, and yet withstand them. It requires a clear view of the cross of Jesus Christ, an absolute faith in the supremacy of spiritual principles, to enable one to resist the fascinations of ceremonialism and tradition. They offer us a more "ornate worship," a more "refined" type of piety, "consecrated by antiquity;" they invite us to enter a selecter circle, and to place ourselves on a higher level than that of the vulgar religionism of faith and feeling. It is the Galatian "persuasion" over again. Ceremony, antiquity, ecclesiastical authority are after all poor substitutes for faith and love. If they come between us and the living Christ, if they limit and dishonour the work of His Spirit, we have a right to say, and we will say with the Apostle Paul, *Away with them!*

The men of tradition are well content that we should "begin in the Spirit," provided they may have the finishing of our faith. To prey upon the Pauline Churches is their ancient and natural habit. An evangelical beginning is too often followed by a ritualistic ending. And Paul is ever begetting spiritual children, to see himself robbed of them by these bewitching Judaizers. "O foolish Galatians," he seems still to be saying, What is it that charms you so much in all this ritual and externalism? Does it bring you nearer to the cross of Christ? Does it give you more of His Spirit? Is it a spiritual satisfaction that you find in these works of Church law, these priestly ordinances and performances? How can the sons of God return

to such childish rudiments? Why should a religion which began so spiritually seek its perfection by means so formal and mechanical?

The conflict which this Epistle signalised is one that has never ceased. Its elements belong to human nature. It is the contest between the religion of the Spirit and that of the letter, between the spontaneity of personal faith and the rights of usage and prescription. The history of the Church is largely the record of this incessant struggle. In every Christian community, in every earnest and devout spirit, it is repeated in some new phase. When the Fathers of the Church in the second and third centuries began to write about "the new law" and to identify the Christian ministry with the Aaronic priesthood, it was evident that Legalism was regaining its ascendancy. Already the foundations were laid of the Catholic Church-system, which culminated in the Papacy of Rome. What Paul's opponents sought to do by means of circumcision and Jewish prerogatives, that the Catholic legalists have done, on a larger scale, through the claims of the priesthood and the sacramental offices. The spiritual functions of the private Christian, one after another, were usurped or carelessly abandoned. Step by step the hierarchy interposed itself between Christ and His people's souls, till its mediation became the sole channel and organ of the Holy Spirit's influence. So it has come to pass, by a strange irony of history, that under the forms of Pauline doctrine and in the name of the Apostle of the Gentiles joined with that of Peter, catholic Christendom, delivered by him from the Jewish yoke, has been entangled in a bondage in some respects even heavier and more repressive. If tradition and prescription are to regulate our

Christian belief, they lead us infallibly to *Rome*, as they would have lead the Galatians to perishing Jerusalem.

III. Paul said he had but one question to ask his readers, that which we have already discussed. And yet he does put to them, by way of parenthesis, another (ver. 4), suggested by what he has already called to mind, touching the beginning of their Christian course: "Have ye suffered so many things in vain?" Their folly was the greater in that *it threatened to deprive them of the fruit of their past sufferings in the cause of Christ.*

The Apostle does not say this without a touch of softened feeling. Remembering the trials these Galatians had formerly endured, the sacrifices they had made in accepting the gospel, he cannot bear to think of their apostasy. Hope breaks through his fear, grief passes into tenderness as he adds, "If it be indeed in vain." The link of reminiscence connecting vv. 3 and 4 is the same as that we find in 1 Thess. i. 6: "Ye received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." *

We need not seek for any peculiar cause of these sufferings; nor wonder that the Apostle does not mention them elsewhere. Every infant Church had its baptism of persecution. No one could come out of heathen society and espouse the cause of Jesus, without making himself a mark for ridicule and violence, without the rupture of family and public ties, and many painful sacrifices. The hatred of Paul's fellow-countrymen towards him was an additional cause of persecution to the Churches he had founded. They were

* Comp. 2 Thess. i. 4—6; Ph. i. 28—30; Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. i. 8

followers of the crucified Nazarene, of the apostate Saul. And they had to suffer for it. With the joy of their new life in Christ, there had come sharp pangs of loss and grief, heart-wounds deep and lasting. This slight allusion sufficiently reminds the Apostle's readers of what they had passed through at the time of their conversion.

And now were they going to surrender the faith won by such a struggle? Would they let themselves be cheated of blessings which had cost them so dear? "*So many things*," he asks, "did you suffer in vain?" He will not believe it. He cannot think that this brave beginning will have so mean an ending. If "God counts them worthy of His kingdom for which they suffered," let them not deem themselves unworthy. Surely they have not escaped from the tyranny of heathenism, in order to yield up their liberties to Jewish intrigue, to the cozenage of false brethren who seek to exalt themselves at their expense (ch. ii. 4; iv. 17; vi. 12, 13). Will flattery beguile from them the treasure to which persecution had made them cling the more closely?

Too often, alas, the Galatian defection is repeated. The generous devotion of youth is followed by the lethargy and formalism of a prosperous age; and the man who at twenty-five was a pattern of godly zeal, at fifty is a finished worldling. The Christ whom he adored, the cross at which he bowed in those early days—he seldom thinks of them now. "I remember thee, *the kindness of thy youth*, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after Me *in the wilderness*." Success has spoiled him. The world's glamour has bewitched him. He bids fair to "end in the flesh."

In a broader sense, the Apostle's question addresses

itself to Churches and communities untrue to the spiritual principles that gave them birth. The faith of the primitive Church, that endured three centuries of persecution, yielded its purity to Imperial blandishments. Our fathers, Puritan and Scottish, staked their lives for the crown-rights of Jesus Christ and the freedom of faith. Through generations they endured social and civil ostracism in the cause of religious liberty. And now that the battle is won, there are those amongst their children who scarcely care to know what the struggle was about. Out of indolence of mind or vanity of scepticism, they abandon at the bidding of priest or sophist the spiritual heritage bequeathed to them. Did *they* then suffer so many things in vain? Was it an illusion that sustained those heroic souls, and enabled them to "stop the mouths of lions and subdue kingdoms"? Was it for nought that so many of Christ's witnesses in these realms since the Reformation days have suffered the loss of all things rather than yield by subjection to a usurping and worldly priesthood? And can we, reaping the fruit of their faith and courage, afford in these altered times to dispense with the principles whose maintenance cost our forefathers so dear a price?

"O foolish Galatians," Paul in that case might well say to us again!

CHAPTER XII.

ABRAHAM'S BLESSING AND THE LAW'S CURSE.

"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Know therefore that they which be of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God justifieth the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one which continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. Now that no man is justified in the law in the sight of God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."—GAL. iii. 6—14.

FAITH then, we have learnt, not works of law, was the condition on which the Galatians received the Spirit of Christ. By this gate they entered the Church of God, and had come into possession of the spiritual blessings common to all Christian believers, and of those extraordinary gifts of grace which marked the Apostolic days.

In this mode of salvation, the Apostle goes on to show, there was after all nothing new. The righteousness of faith is more ancient than legalism. It is as old as *Abraham*. His religion rested on this ground.

"The promise of the Spirit," held by him in trust for the world, was given to his faith. "You received the Spirit, God works in you His marvellous powers, by the hearing of faith—*even as Abraham believed God*, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." In the hoary patriarchal days as now, in the time of promise as of fulfilment, faith is the root of religion; grace invites, righteousness waits upon the hearing of faith. So Paul declares in vv. 6—9, and re-affirms with emphasis in ver. 14. The intervening sentences set forth by contrast *the curse* that hangs over the man who seeks salvation by way of law and personal merit.

Thus the two standing types of religion, the two ways by which men seek salvation, are put in contrast with each other—faith with its blessing, law with its curse. The former is the path on which the Galatians had entered, under the guidance of Paul; the latter, that to which the Judaic teachers were leading them. So far the two principles stand only in antagonism. The antinomy will be resolved in the latter part of the chapter.

But why does Paul make so much of the faith of *Abraham?* Not only because it furnished him with a telling illustration, or because the words of Gen. xv. 6 supplied a decisive proof-text for his doctrine: he could not well have chosen any other ground. Abraham's case was the *instantia probans* in this debate. "We are Abraham's seed:"* this was the proud consciousness that swelled every Jewish breast. "Abraham's bosom" was the Israelite's heaven: even in Hades his guilty sons could claim pity from "Father Abraham" (Luke xvi. 19—31). In the use of this title was con-

* Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 33—59.

centrated all the theocratic pride and national bigotry of the Jewish race. To the example of Abraham the Judaistic teacher would not fail to appeal. He would tell the Galatians how the patriarch was called, like themselves, out of the heathen world to the knowledge of the true God; how he was separated from his Gentile kindred, and received the mark of circumcision to be worn thenceforth by all who followed in his steps, and who sought the fulfilment of the promise granted to Abraham and his seed.

The Apostle holds, as strongly as any Judaist, that the promise belongs to the children of Abraham. *But what makes a son of Abraham?* "Birth, true Jewish blood, of course," replied the Judaist. The Gentile, in his view, could only come into a share of the heritage by receiving circumcision, the mark of legal adoption and incorporation. Paul answers this question by raising another. What was it that brought Abraham his blessing? To what did he owe his righteousness? It was *faith:* so Scripture declares—"Abraham believed God." Righteousness, covenant, promise, blessing—all turned upon this. And *the true sons of Abraham are those who are like him:* "Know then that the men of faith, these are Abraham's sons." This declaration is a blow, launched with studied effect full in the face of Jewish privilege. Only a Pharisee, only a Rabbi, knew how to wound in this fashion. Like the words of Stephen's defence, such sentences as these stung Judaic pride to the quick. No wonder that his fellow-countrymen, in their fierce fanaticism of race, pursued Paul with burning hate and set a mark upon his life.

But the identity of Abraham's blessing with that enjoyed by Gentile Christians is not left to rest on mere

inference and analogy of principle. Another quotation clinches the argument: "In thee," God promised to the patriarch, "shall be blessed"—not the natural seed, not the circumcised alone—but "all the nations (Gentiles)"! * And "the Scripture" said this, "foreseeing" what is now taking place, namely, "that God justifieth the Gentiles by faith." So that in giving this promise to Abraham it gave him his "gospel before the time (*προευηγγελίσατο*)." Good news indeed it was to the noble patriarch, that all the nations—of whom as a wide traveller he knew so much, and over whose condition he doubtless grieved—were finally to be blessed with the light of faith and the knowledge of the true God; and thus blessed through himself. In this prospect he "rejoiced to see Christ's day;" nay the Saviour tells us, like Moses and Elijah, "he saw it and was glad." Up to this point in Abraham's history, as Paul's readers would observe, there was no mention of circumcision or legal requirement (ver. 17; Rom. iv. 9—13). It was on purely evangelical principles, by a declaration of God's grace listened to in thankful faith, that he had received the promise which linked him to the universal Church and entitled every true believer to call him father. "So that the men of faith are blessed, along with faithful Abraham."

I. What then, we ask, was *the nature of Abraham's blessing?* In its essence, it was *righteousness.* The "blessing of vv. 9 and 14 is synonymous with the "justification" of vv. 6 and 8, embracing with it all its fruits

* Gen. xii. 3: the first promise to Abraham. In this text the Hebrew and the Greek (LXX) say, *All the tribes* (*families*) *of the earth.* The synonymous *ἔθνη*, with its special Jewish connotation, suited Paul's purpose better; and it is used in the repetition of the promise in Gen. xviii. 18.

and consequences. No higher benediction could come to any man than that God should "count him righteous."

Paul and the Legalists agreed in designating righteousness before God man's chief good. But they and he intended different things by it. Nay, Paul's conception of righteousness, it is said, differed radically from that of the Old Testament, and even of his companion writers in the New Testament. Confessedly, his doctrine presents this idea under a peculiar aspect. But there is a spiritual identity, a common basis of truth, in all the Biblical teaching on this vital subject. Abraham's righteousness was the state of a man who trustfully accepts God's word of grace, and is thereby set right with God, and put in the way of being and doing right thenceforward. In virtue of his faith, God regarded and dealt with Abraham as a righteous man. Righteousness of character springs out of righteousness of standing. God makes a man righteous by counting him so! This is the Divine paradox of Justification by Faith. When the Hebrew author says, "God counted it to him for righteousness," he does not mean *in lieu of righteousness*, as though faith were a substitute for a righteousness not forthcoming and now rendered superfluous; but *so as to amount to righteousness, with a view to righteousness*. This "reckoning" is the sovereign act of the Creator, who gives what He demands, "who maketh alive the dead, and calleth the things that are not as though they were" (Rom. iv. 17—22). He sees the fruit in the germ.

There is nothing arbitrary, or merely forensic in this imputation. Faith is, for such a being as man, the spring of all righteousness before God, the one act of the soul which is primarily and supremely right. What

is more just than that the creature should trust his Creator, the child his Father? Here is the root of all right understanding and right relations between men and God—that which gives God, so to speak, a moral hold upon us. And by this trust of the heart, yielding itself in the "obedience of faith" to its Lord and Redeemer, it comes into communion with all those energies and purposes in Him which make for righteousness. Hence from first to last, alike in the earlier and later stages of revelation, man's righteousness is "not his own;" it is "the righteousness that is of God, based upon faith" (Phil. iii. 9). Faith unites us to the source of righteousness, from which unbelief severs us. So that Paul's teaching leads us to the fountain-head, while other Biblical teachers for the most part guide us along the course of the same Divine righteousness for man. His doctrine is required by theirs; their doctrine is implied, and indeed more than once expressly stated, in his.*

The Old Testament deals with the materials of character, with the qualities and behaviour constituting a righteous man, more than with the cause or process that makes him righteous. All the more significant therefore are such pronouncements as that of Gen. xv. 6, and the saying of Hab. ii. 4, Paul's other leading quotation on this subject. This second reference, taken from the times of Israel's declension, a thousand years and more after Abraham, gives proof of the vitality of the righteousness of faith. The haughty, sensual Chaldean is master of the earth. Kingdom after kingdom he has trampled down. Judah lies at his mercy, and has no mercy to expect. But the prophet looks beyond the

* Rom. viii. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 9; Eph. v. 9; Tit. ii. 12—14; etc.

storm and ruin of the time. "Art Thou not from everlasting, my God, my Holy One? We shall not die" (Hab. i. 12). The faith of Abraham lives in his breast. The people in whom that faith is cannot die. While empires fall, and races are swept away in the flood of conquest, "The just shall live by his faith."* If faith is seen here at a different point from that given before, it is still the same faith of Abraham, the grasp of the soul upon the Divine word—*there* first evoked, *here* steadfastly maintained, there and here the one ground of righteousness, and therefore of life, for man or for people. Habakkuk and the "remnant" of his day were "blessed with faithful Abraham;" how blessed, his splendid prophecy shows. Righteousness is of faith; life of righteousness: this is the doctrine of Paul, witnessed to by law and prophets.

Into what a life of blessing the righteousness of faith introduced "faithful Abraham," these Galatian students of the Old Testament very well knew. Twice† is he designated "the friend of God." The Arabs still call him *el khalil,—the friend.* His image has impressed itself with singular force on the Oriental mind. He is the noblest figure of the Old Testament, surpassing Isaac in force, Jacob in purity, and both in dignity of character. The man to whom God said, "Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward;" and again, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect:" on how lofty a platform of spiritual eminence was he set! The scene of

* *Of faith* qualifies *live* in the Hebrew of the prophet, and in the LXX. also in the quotation of Heb. x. 38. The presumption is that it does so in Rom. i. 17, and Gal. iii. 11. We can see no sufficient reason in these passages to the contrary.

† 2 Chron. xx. 7; Isai. xli. 8; comp. Jas. ii. 23.

Gen. xviii. throws into striking relief the greatness of Abraham, the greatness of our human nature in him; when the Lord says, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" and allows him to make his bold intercession for the guilty cities of the Plain. Even the trial to which the patriarch was subjected in the sacrifice of Isaac, was a singular honour, done to one whose faith was "counted worthy to endure" this unexampled strain. His religion exhibits an heroic strength and firmness, but at the same time a large-hearted, genial humanity, an elevation and serenity of mind, to which the temper of those who boasted themselves his children was utterly opposed. Father of the Jewish race, Abraham was no Jew. He stands before us in the morning light of revelation a simple, noble, archaic type of *man*, true "father of many nations." And his faith was the secret of the greatness which has commanded for him the reverence of four thousand years. His trust in God made him worthy to receive so immense a trust for the future of mankind.

With Abraham's faith, the Gentiles inherit his blessing. They were not simply blessed *in* him, through his faith which received and handed down the blessing,—but blessed *with* him. Their righteousness rests on the same principle as his. Religion reverts to its earlier purer type. Just as in the Epistle to the Hebrews Melchizedek's priesthood is adduced as belonging to a more Christlike order, antecedent to and underlying the Aaronic; so we find here, beneath the cumbrous structure of legalism, the evidence of a primitive religious life, cast in a larger mould, with a happier style of experience, a piety broader, freer, at once more spiritual and more human. Reading the story of Abraham, we witness the bright dawn of faith, its spring-

time of promise and of hope. These morning hours passed away; and the sacred history shuts us in to the hard school of Mosaism, with its isolation, its mechanical routine and ritual drapery, its yoke of legal exaction ever growing more burdensome. Of all this the Church of Christ was to know nothing. It was called to enter into the labours of the legal centuries, without the need of sharing their burdens. In the "Father of the faithful" and the "Friend of God" Gentile believers were to see their exemplar, to find the warrant for that sufficiency and freedom of faith of which the natural children of Abraham unjustly strove to rob them.

II. But if the Galatians are resolved to be under the Law, they must understand what this means. *The legal state*, Paul declares, instead of the blessing of Abraham, *brings with it a curse:* "As many as are of law-works, are under a curse."

This the Apostle, in other words, had told Peter at Antioch. He maintained that whoever sets up the law as a ground of salvation, "makes himself a transgressor" (ch. ii. 18); he brings upon himself the misery of having violated law. This is no doubtful contingency. The law in explicit terms pronounces its curse against every man who, binding himself to keep it, yet breaks it in any particular.

The Scripture which Paul quotes to this effect, forms the conclusion of the commination uttered by the people of Israel, according to the directions of Moses, from Mount Ebal, on their entrance into Canaan: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." * How terribly

* Deut. xxvii. 26; Jos. viii. 32—35. *All things*, given by the LXX in the former passage, is wanting in the Hebrew. But the phrase is true to the spirit of this text, and is read in the parallel Deut. xxviii. 15.

had that imprecation been fulfilled! They had in truth pledged themselves to the impossible. The Law had not been kept—could not be kept on merely legal principles, by man or nation. The confessions of the Old Testament, already cited in ch. ii. 16, were proof of this. That no one had "continued in all things written in the law to do them," goes without saying. If Gentile Christians adopt the law of Moses, they must be prepared to render an obedience complete and unfaltering in every detail (ch. v. 3)—or have this curse hanging perpetually above their heads. They will bring on themselves the very condemnation which was lying so heavily upon the conscience of Israel after the flesh.

This sequence of law and transgression belonged to Paul's deepest convictions. "The law," he says, "worketh out wrath" (Rom. iv. 14, 15). This is an axiom of Paulinism. Human nature being what it is, law means transgression; and the law being what it is, transgression means Divine anger and the curse (see p. 143). The law is just; the penalty is necessary. The conscience of the ancient people of God compelled them to pronounce the imprecation dictated by Moses. The same thing occurs every day, and under the most varied moral conditions. Every man who knows what is right and will not do it, *execrates* himself. The consciousness of transgression is a clinging, inward curse, a witness of ill-desert, foreboding punishment. The law of conscience, like that of Ebal and Gerizim, admits of no exceptions, no intermission. In the majesty of its unbending sternness it can only be satisfied by our *continuing in all things* that it prescribes. Every instance of failure, attended with whatever excuse or condonation, leaves upon us its mark of self-reproach.

And this inward condemnation, this consciousness of guilt latent in the human breast, is not self-condemnation alone, not a merely subjective state; but it proceeds from God's present judgement on the man. It is the shadow of His just displeasure.

What Paul here proves from Scripture, bitter experience had taught him. As the law unfolded itself to his youthful conscience, he approved it as "holy and just and good." He was pledged and resolved to observe it in every point. He must despise himself if he acted otherwise. He strove to be—in the sight of men indeed he was—"touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." If ever a man carried out to the letter the legal requirements, and fulfilled the moralist's ideal, it was Saul of Tarsus. Yet his failure was complete, desperate! While men accounted him a paragon of virtue, he loathed himself; he knew that before God his righteousness was worthless. The "law of sin in his members" defied "the law of his reason," and made its power the more sensible the more it was repressed. The curse thundered by the six tribes from Ebal resounded in his ears. And there was no escape. The grasp of the law was relentless, because it was just, like the grasp of death. Against all that was holiest in it the evil in himself stood up in stark, immitigable opposition. "O wretched man that I am," groans the proud Pharisee, "who shall deliver me!" From this curse Christ had redeemed him. And he would not, if he could help it, have the Galatians expose themselves to it again. On legal principles, there is no safety but in absolute, flawless obedience, such as no man ever has rendered, or ever will. Let them trust the experience of centuries of Jewish bondage.

Verses 11, 12 support the assertion that the Law issues in condemnation, by a further, negative proof. The argument is a syllogism, both whose premises are drawn from the Old Testament. It may be formally stated thus. *Major premise* (evangelical maxim): "The just man lives of faith" * (ver. 11). *Minor:* The man of law does not live of faith (for he lives by doing: legal maxim, ver. 12). † *Ergo:* The man of law is not just before God (ver. 11). While therefore the Scripture by its afore-cited commination closes the door of life against righteousness of works, that door is opened to the men of faith. The two principles are logical contradictories. To grant righteousness to faith is to deny it to legal works. This assumption furnishes our minor premise in ver. 12. The legal axiom is, "He that doeth them shall live in them:" that is to say, *The law gives life for doing*—not therefore *for believing;* we get no sort of legal credit for that. The two ways have different starting-points, as they lead to opposite goals. From faith one marches, through God's righteousness, to blessing; from works, through self-righteousness, to the curse.

The two paths now lie before us—the Pauline and the legal method of salvation, the Abrahamic and the Mosaic scheme of religion. According to the latter, one begins by keeping so many rules—ethical, ceremonial, or what not; and after doing this, one expects to be counted righteous by God. According to the former, the man begins by an act of self-surrendering trust in God's word of grace, and God already reckons him just on that account, without his pretending to anything in the way of merit for himself. In short,

* Hab. ii. 4. For the construction, see *note* on p. 186.

† Lev. xviii. 5.

the Legalist tries *to make God believe in him:* Abraham and Paul are content *to believe in God.* They do not set themselves over against God, with a righteousness of their own which He is bound to recognise; they commit themselves to God, that He may work out His righteousness in them. Along this path lies blessing—peace of heart, fellowship with God, moral strength, *life* in its fulness, depth, and permanence. From this source Paul derives all that was noblest in the Church of the Old Covenant. And he puts the calm, grand image of Father Abraham before us for our pattern, in contrast with the narrow, painful, bitter spirit of Jewish legalism, inwardly self-condemned.

III. But how pass from this curse to that blessing? How escape from the nemesis of the broken law into the freedom of Abraham's faith? To this question ver. 13 makes answer: "Christ bought us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." *Christ's redemption changes the curse into a blessing.*

We entered this Epistle under the shadow of the cross. It has been all along the centre of the writer's thought. He has found in it the solution of the terrible problem forced upon him by the law. Law had led him to Christ's cross; laid him in Christ's grave; and there left him, to rise with Christ a new, free man, living henceforth to God (ch. ii. 19—21). So we understand the purpose and the issue of the death of Jesus Christ; now we must look more narrowly at the fact itself.

"Christ became a curse!" Verily the Apostle was not "seeking to please or persuade men." This expression throws the scandal of the cross into the strongest relief. Far from veiling it or apologizing for it, Paul accentuates this offence. His experience taught

him that Jewish pride must be compelled to reckon with it. No, he would not have "the offence of the cross abolished" (ch. v. 11).

And did not Christ *become a curse?* Could the fact be denied by any Jew? His death was that of the most abandoned criminals. By the combined verdict of Jew and Gentile, of civil and religious authority, endorsed by the voice of the populace, He was pronounced a malefactor and blasphemer. But this was not all. The hatred and injustice of men are hard to bear; yet many a sensitive man has borne them in a worthy cause without shrinking. It was a darker dread, an infliction far more crushing, that compelled the cry, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" Against the maledictions of men Jesus might surely at the worst have counted on the Father's good pleasure. But even that failed Him. There fell upon His soul the death of death, the very curse of sin—*abandonment by God!* Men "did esteem Him"—and for the moment He esteemed Himself—"smitten of God." He hung there abhorred of men, forsaken of His God; earth all hate, heaven all blackness to His view. Are the Apostle's words too strong? Delivering up His Son to pass through this baptism, God did in truth *make Him a curse* for us. By His "determinate counsel" the Almighty set Jesus Christ in the place of condemned sinners, and allowed the curse of this wicked world to claim Him for its victim.

The death that befell Him was chosen as if for the purpose of declaring Him accursed. The Jewish people have thus stigmatized Him. They made the Roman magistrate and the heathen soldiery their instrument in *gibbeting* their Messiah. "Shall I crucify your King?" said Pilate. "Yes," they answered, "crucify Him!"

Their rulers thought to lay on the hated Nazarene an everlasting curse. Was it not written, "A curse of God is every one that hangeth on a tree?" * This saying attached in the Jewish mind a peculiar loathing to the person of the dead thus exposed. Once *crucified*, the name of Jesus would surely perish from the lips of men; no Jew would hereafter dare to profess faith in Him. His cause could never surmount this ignominy. In later times the bitterest epithet that Jewish scorn could fling against our Saviour (God forgive them!), was just this word of Deuteronomy, *hattalúy—the hanged one.*

This sentence of execration, with its shame freshly-smarting, Paul has seized and twined into a crown of glory. "Hanged on a tree, crushed with reproach—*accursed*, you say, He was, my Lord, my Saviour! It is true. But the curse He bore was *ours*. His death, unmerited by Him, was our ransom-price, endured to buy us out of our curse of sin and death." This is the doctrine of *the vicarious sacrifice*. In speaking of "ransom" and "redemption," using the terms of the market, Christ and His Apostles are applying human language to things in their essence unutterable, things which we define in their effects rather than in themselves. "We know, we prophesy, in part." We know that we were condemned by God's holy law; that Christ, Himself sinless, came under the law's curse, and taking the place of sinners, "became sin for us;"

* The Hebrew of Deut. xxi. 23 reads "a curse *of God*;" the LXX, "cursed *by God*" (κεκαταρημένος however, not ἐπικατάρατος as in Paul's phrase). The Apostle omits the two last words, not inadvertently, as Meyer supposes, for he must have had a painfully vivid remembrance of the wording of the original, but out of a reverence that made it impossible to speak of the Redeemer as "accursed *by God*."

and that His interposition has brought us out of condemnation into blessing and peace. How can we conceive the matter otherwise than as it is put in His own words: He "gave Himself a ransom—The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep?" He suffers in our room and stead; He bears inflictions incurred by our sins, and due to ourselves; He does this at the Divine Will, and under the Divine Law: what is this but to "buy us out," to pay the price which frees us from the prison-house of death?

"Christ redeemed *us*," says the Apostle, thinking questionless of himself and his Jewish kindred, on whom the law weighed so heavily. His redemption was offered "to the Jew first." But not to the Jew alone, nor as a Jew. The time of release had come for all men. "Abraham's blessing" long withheld, was now to be imparted, as it had been promised, to "all the tribes of the earth." In the removal of the legal curse, God comes near to men as in the ancient days. His love is shed abroad; His spirit of sonship dwells in human hearts. In Christ Jesus crucified, risen, reigning—a new world comes into being, which restores and surpasses the promise of the old.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COVENANT OF PROMISE.

"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's testament, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say; A testament confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise."—GAL. iii. 15—18.

GENTILE Christians, Paul has shown, are already sons of Abraham. Their faith proves their descent from the father of the faithful. The redemption of Christ has expiated the law's curse, and brought to its fulfilment the primeval promise. It has conferred on Jew and Gentile alike the gift of the Holy Spirit, sealing the Divine inheritance. "Abraham's blessing" has "come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus." What can Judaism do for them more? Except, in sooth, to bring them under its inevitable curse.

But here the Judaist might interpose: "Granting so much as this, allowing that God covenanted with Abraham on terms of faith, and that believing Gentiles are entitled to his blessing, did not God make *a second covenant with Moses*, promising further blessings upon

terms of law? If the one covenant remains valid, why not the other? From the school of Abraham the Gentiles must pass on to the school of Moses." This inference might appear to follow, by parity of reasoning, from what the Apostle has just advanced. And it accords with the position which the legalistic opposition had now taken up. The people of the circumcision, they argued, retained within the Church of Christ their peculiar calling; and Gentiles, if they would be perfect Christians, must accept the covenant-token and the unchangeable ordinances of Israel. Faith is but the first step in the new life; the discipline of the law will bring it to completion. Release from the curse of the law, they might contend, leaves its obligations still binding, its ordinances unrepealed. Christ "came not to destroy, but to fulfil."

So we are brought to the question of *the relation of law and promise*, which is the theoretical, as that of Gentile to Jewish Christianity is the practical problem of the Epistle. The remainder of the chapter is occupied with its discussion. This section is the special contribution of the Epistle to Christian theology—a contribution weighty enough of itself to give to it a foremost place amongst the documents of Revelation. Paul has written nothing more masterly. The breadth and subtlety of his reason, his grasp of the spiritual realities underlying the facts of history, are conspicuously manifest in these paragraphs, despite the extreme difficulty and obscurity of certain sentences.

This part of the Epistle is in fact a piece of inspired *historical criticism;* it is a magnificent reconstruction of the course of sacred history. It is Paul's theory of doctrinal development, condensing into a few pregnant sentences the *rationale* of Judaism, explaining the

method of God's dealings with mankind from Abraham down to Christ, and fitting the legal system into its place in this order with an exactness and consistency that supply an effectual verification of the hypothesis. To such a height has the Apostle been raised, so completely is he emancipated from the fetters of Jewish thought, that the whole Mosaic economy becomes to his mind no more than an interlude, a passing stage in the march of Revelation.

This passage finds its counterpart in Romans xi. Here the past, there the future fortunes of Israel are set forth. Together the two chapters form a Jewish theodicy, a vindication of God's treatment of the chosen people from first to last. Rom. v. 12—21 and 1 Cor. xv. 20—57 supply a wider exposition, on the same principles, of the fortunes of mankind at large. The human mind has conceived nothing more splendid and yet sober, more humbling and exalting, than the view of man's history and destiny thus sketched out.

The Apostle seeks to establish, in the first place, *the fixedness of the Abrahamic covenant.* This is the main purport of the passage. At the same time, in ver. 16, he brings into view *the Object of the covenant*, the person designated by it—*Christ*, its proper Heir. This consideration, though stated here parenthetically, lies at the basis of the settlement made with Abraham; its importance is made manifest by the after course of Paul's exposition.

At this point, where the discussion opens out into its larger proportions, we observe that the sharp tone of personal feeling with which the chapter commenced has disappeared. In ver. 15 the writer drops into a conciliatory key. He seems to forget the wounded Apostle in

the theologian and instructor in Christ. "Brethren," he says, "I speak in human fashion—I put this matter in a way that every one will understand." He lifts himself above the Galatian quarrel, and from the height of his argument addresses himself to the common intelligence of mankind.

But is it *covenant*, or *testament*, that the Apostle intends here? "I speak after the manner of men," he continues; "if the case were that of a man's διαθήκη, once ratified, no one would set it aside, or add to it." The presumption is that the word is employed in its accepted, every-day significance. And that unquestionably was "testament." It would never occur to an ordinary Greek reader to interpret the expression otherwise. Philo and Josephus, the representatives of contemporary Hellenistic usage, read this term, in the Old Testament, with the connotation of διαθήκη in current Greek.* The context of this passage is in harmony with their usage. The "covenant" of ver. 15 corresponds to "the blessing of Abraham," and "the promise of the Spirit" in the two preceding verses. Again in ver. 17, "promise" and "covenant" are synonymous. Now a "covenant of promise" amounts to a "testament." It is the *prospective* nature of the covenant, the bond which it creates between Abraham and the Gentiles, which the Apostle has been insisting on ever since ver. 6. It belongs "to Abraham and to his seed"; it comes by way of "gift" and "grace" (vv. 18, 22); it invests those taking part in it with "sonship" and rights of "inheritance" (vv. 18, 26, 29, etc.) These ideas cluster round the thought of *a testament;* they are not inherent in *covenant*, strictly

* See the able and convincing elucidation of διαθήκη in Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of N.T. Greek.*

considered. Even in the Old Testament this latter designation fails to convey all that belongs to the Divine engagements there recorded. In a covenant the two parties are conceived as equals in point of law, binding themselves by a compact that bears on each alike. Here it is not so. The disposition of affairs is made by God, who in the sovereignty of His grace "hath granted it to Abraham." It was surely a reverent sense of this difference which dictated to the men of the Septuagint the use of διαθήκη rather than συνθήκη, the ordinary term for *covenant* or *compact*, in their rendering of the Hebrew *berith*.

This aspect of the covenants now becomes their commanding feature. Our Lord's employment of this word at the Last Supper gave it the affecting reference to His death which it has conveyed ever since to the Christian mind.* The Latin translators were guided by a true instinct when in the Scriptures of the New Covenant they wrote *testamentum* everywhere, not *fœdus* or *pactum*, for this word. The testament is a covenant—and something more. The testator designates his heir, and binds himself to grant to him at the predetermined time (ch. iv. 2) the specified boon, which it remains for the beneficiary simply to accept. Such a Divine *testament* has come down from Abraham to his Gentile sons.

I. Now when a man has made a testament, and it has been ratified—"proved," as we should say—*it stands good for ever*. No one has afterwards any power

* See Heb. ix. 16—18, where so much ingenuity has been expended to turn *testament* into *covenant*.

"*Sweet is the memory of His name,*
Who blessed us in His will.

to set it aside, or to attach to it a new codicil, modifying its previous terms. There it stands—a document complete and unchangeable (ver. 15).

Such a testament God gave "to Abraham and his seed." It was "ratified" (or "confirmed") by the final attestation made to the patriarch after the supreme trial of his faith in the sacrifice of Isaac: "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven; . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."* In human testaments the ratification takes place through another; but God "having no greater," yet "to show to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel" confirmed it by His own oath. Nothing was wanting to mark the Abrahamic covenant with an indelible character, and to show that it expressed an unalterable purpose in the mind of God.

With such Divine asseveration "were the promises spoken to Abraham, and *his seed*." This last word diverts the Apostle's thoughts for a moment, and he gives a side-glance at the person thus designated in the terms of the promise. Then he returns to his former statement, urging it home against the Legalists: "Now this is what I mean: a testament previously ratified by God, the Law which dates four hundred and thirty years later cannot annul, so as to abrogate the Promise" (ver. 17). The bearing of Paul's argument is now perfectly clear. He is using the promise to Abraham to overthrow the supremacy of the Mosaic law. The Promise was, he says, the prior settlement. No subsequent transaction could invalidate it or disqualify those

* Gen. xxii. 8 16—1; Heb. vi. 17.

entitled under it to receive the inheritance. That testament lies at the foundation of the sacred history. The Jew least of all could deny this. How could such an instrument be set aside? Or what right has any one to limit it by stipulations of a later date?

When a man amongst ourselves bequeaths his property, and his will is publicly attested, its directions are scrupulously observed; to tamper with them is a crime. Shall we have less respect to this Divine settlement, this venerable charter of human salvation? You say, The Law of Moses has its rights: it must be taken into account as well as the Promise to Abraham. True; but it has no power to cancel or restrict the Promise, older by four centuries and a half. The later must be adjusted to the earlier dispensation, the Law interpreted by the Promise. God has not made *two* testaments—the one solemnly committed to the faith and hope of mankind, only to be retracted and substituted by something of a different stamp. He could not thus stultify Himself. And we must not apply the Mosaic enactments, addressed to a single people, in such a way as to neutralise the original provisions made for the race at large. Our human instincts of good faith, our reverence for public compacts and established rights, forbid our allowing the Law of Moses to trench upon the inheritance assured to mankind in the Covenant of Abraham.

This contradiction necessarily arises if the Law is put on a level with the Promise. To read the Law as a continuation of the older instrument is virtually to efface the latter, to "make the promise of none effect." The two institutes proceed on opposite principles. "If the inheritance is of law, it is no longer of promise" (ver. 18). Law prescribes certain things to be done,

and guarantees a corresponding reward—so much pay for so much work. That, in its proper place, is an excellent principle. But the promise stands on another footing: "God hath *bestowed* it on Abraham *by way of grace*" (κεχάρισται," ver. 18). It holds out a blessing conferred by the Promiser's good will, to be conveyed at the right time without demanding anything more from the recipient than faith, which is just the will to receive. So God dealt with Abraham, centuries before any one had dreamed of the Mosaic system of law. God appeared to Abraham in His sovereign grace; Abraham met that grace with faith. So the Covenant was formed. And so it abides, clear of all legal conditions and claims of human merit, an "everlasting covenant" (Gen. xvii. 7; Heb. xiii. 20).

Its permanence is emphasized by the *tense* of the verb relating to it. The Greek *perfect* describes settled facts, actions or events that carry with them finality. Accordingly we read in vv. 15 and 17 of "a ratified covenant"—one that *stands* ratified. In ver. 18, "God hath granted it to Abraham"—a grace never to be recalled. Again (ver. 19), "the seed to whom the promise hath been made"—once for all. A perfect participle is used of the Law in ver. 17 (γεγονώς), for it is a fact of abiding significance that it was so much later than the Promise; and in ver. 24, "the Law hath been our tutor,"—its work in that respect is an enduring benefit. Otherwise, the verbs relating to Mosaism in this context are past in tense, describing what is now matter of history, a course of events that has come and gone. Meanwhile the Promise remains, an immovable certainty, a settlement never to be disturbed. The emphatic position of ὁ Θεός (ver. 18), at the very end of the paragraph, serves to heighten this effect.

"It is *God* that hath bestowed this grace on Abraham." There is a challenge in the word, as though Paul asked, "Who shall make it void?"*

Paul's chronology in ver. 17 has been called in question. We are not much concerned to defend it. Whether Abraham preceded Moses by four hundred and thirty years, as the Septuagint and the Samaritan text of Exod. xii. 40, 41 affirm, and as Paul's contemporaries commonly supposed; or whether, as it stands in the Hebrew text of Exodus, this was the length of time covered by the sojourn in Egypt, so that the entire period would be about half as long again, is a problem that Old Testament historians must settle for themselves; it need not trouble the reader of Paul. The shorter period is amply sufficient for his purpose. If any one had said, "No, Paul; you are mistaken. It was six hundred and thirty, not four hundred and thirty years from Abraham to Moses;" he would have accepted the correction with the greatest goodwill. He might have replied, "So much the better for my argument."† It is possible to "strain out" the "gnats" of Biblical criticism, and yet to swallow huge "camels" of improbability.

II. Ver. 16 remains for our consideration. In proving the steadfastness of the covenant with Abraham, the Apostle at the same time directs our attention to *the Person designated by it*, to whom its fulfilment was guaranteed. "To Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed—'to thy seed,' which is Christ."

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* Comp. Rom. viii. 33, 34; Acts xi. 17; 2 Cor. i. 21, for a similar emphasis.

† We gain nothing, and we may lose much, in "trying to settle questions of Old Testament historical criticism by casual allusions in the New Testament." (See Mr. Beet's sensible observations, in his Commentary *ad loc.*)

This identification the Judaist would not question. He made no doubt that the Messiah was the legatee of the testament, "the seed to whom it hath been promised." Whatever partial and germinant fulfilments the Promise had received, it is on Christ in chief that the inheritance of Israel devolves. In its true and full intent, this promise, like all predictions of the triumph of God's kingdom, was understood to be waiting for His advent.

The fact that this Promise looked to Christ, lends additional force to the Apostle's assertion of its indelibility. The words "unto Christ," which were inserted in the text of ver. 17 at an early time, are a correct gloss. The covenant did not lie between God and Abraham alone. It embraced Abraham's descendants in their unity, culminating in Christ. It looked down the stream of time to the last ages. Abraham was its starting-point; Christ its goal. "To thee—and to thy seed:" these words span the gulf of two thousand years, and overarch the Mosaic dispensation. So that the covenant vouchsafed to Abraham placed him, even at that distance of time, in close personal relationship with the Saviour of mankind. No wonder that it was so evangelical in its terms, and brought the patriarch an experience of religion which anticipated the privileges of Christian faith. God's covenant with Abraham, being in effect His covenant with mankind in Christ, stands both first and last. The Mosaic economy holds a second and subsidiary place in the scheme of Revelation.

The reason the Apostle gives for reading *Christ* into the promise is certainly peculiar. He has been taxed with false exegesis, with "rabbinical hair-splitting" and the like. Here, it is said, is a fine example of the art, familiar to theologians, of torturing

out of a word a predetermined sense, foreign to its original meaning. "He doth not say, and to *seeds*, as referring to many; but as referring to one, and to thy *seed*, which is Christ." Paul appears to infer from the fact that the word "seed" is grammatically singular, and not plural, that it designates a single individual, who can be no other than Christ. On the surface this does, admittedly, look like a verbal quibble. The word "seed," in Hebrew and Greek as in English, is not used, and could not in ordinary speech be used in the plural to denote a number of descendants. It is a collective singular. The plural applies only to *different kinds* of seed. The Apostle, we may presume, was quite as well aware of this as his critics. It does not need philological research or grammatical acumen to establish a distinction obvious to common sense. This piece of word-play is in reality the vehicle of an historical argument, as unimpeachable as it is important. Abraham was taught, by a series of lessons,* to refer the promise to *the single line* of Isaac. Paul elsewhere lays great stress on this consideration; he brings Isaac into close analogy with Christ; for he was the child of faith, and represented in his birth a spiritual principle and the communication of a supernatural life.† The true seed of Abraham was in the first instance *one*, not many. In the primary realisation of the Promise, typical of its final accomplishment, it received a *singular* interpretation; it concentrated itself on the one, spiritual offspring, putting aside the many, natural and heterogeneous (Hagarite or Keturite) descendants. And this sifting principle, this law of

* Gen. xii. 2, 3; xv. 2—6; xvii. 4—8, 15—21; xxii. 16—18

† Ch. iv. 21—31; Rom. iv. 17—22; comp. Heb. xi. 11, 12.

election which singles out from the varieties of nature the Divine type, comes into play all along the line of descent, as in the case of Jacob, and of David. It finds its supreme expression in the person of Christ. The Abrahamic testament devolved under a law of spiritual selection. By its very nature it pointed ultimately to Jesus Christ. When Paul writes "Not to seeds, as of many," he virtually says that the word of inspiration was singular in *sense* as well as in form; in the mind of the Promiser, and in the interpretation given to it by events, it bore an individual reference, and was never intended to apply to Abraham's descendants at large, to the many and miscellaneous "children according to flesh."

Paul's interpretation of the Promise has abundant analogies. All great principles of human history tend to embody themselves in some "chosen seed." They find at last their true heir, the *one man* destined to be their fulfilment. Moses, David, Paul; Socrates and Alexander; Shakespere, Newton, are examples of this. The work that such men do belongs to themselves. Had any promise assured the world of the gifts to be bestowed through them, in each case one might have said beforehand, It will have to be, "Not as of many, but as of one." It is not multitudes, but men that rule the world. "By *one man* sin entered into the world: we shall reign in life through *the one* Jesus Christ." From the first words of hope given to the repentant pair banished from Eden, down to the latest predictions of the Coming One, the Promise became at every stage more determinate and individualising. The finger of prophecy pointed with increasing distinctness, now from this side, now from that, to the veiled form of the Chosen of God—"the seed of the woman," the

"seed of Abraham," the "star out of Jacob," the "Son of David," the "King Messiah," the suffering "Servant of the Lord," the "smitten Shepherd," the "Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven." In His person all the lines of promise and preparation meet; the scattered rays of Divine light are brought to a focus. And the desire of all nations, groping, half-articulate, unites with the inspired foresight of the seers of Israel to find its goal in Jesus Christ. There was but *One* who could meet the manifold conditions created by the world's previous history, and furnish the key to the mysteries and contradictions which had gathered round the path of Revelation.

Notwithstanding, the Promise had and has a *generic* application, attending its personal accomplishment. "Salvation is of the Jews." Christ belongs "to the Jew first." Israel was raised up and consecrated to be the trustee of the Promise given to the world through Abraham. The vocation of this gifted race, the secret of its indestructible vitality, lies in its relationship to Jesus Christ. They are "His own," though they "received Him not." Apart from Him, Israel is nothing to the world—nothing but a witness against itself. Premising its essential fulfilment in Christ, Paul still reserves for his own people their peculiar share in the Testament of Abraham—not a place of exclusive privilege, but of richer honour and larger influence. "Hath God cast away His people?" he asks: "Nay indeed. For I also am an Israelite, of *the seed of Abraham*." So that, after all, it is something to be of Abraham's children by nature. Despite his hostility to Judaism, the Apostle claims for the Jewish race a special office in the dispensation of the Gospel, in the working out of God's ultimate designs

for mankind.* Would they only accept their Messiah, how exalted a rank amongst the nations awaits them! The title "seed of Abraham" with Paul, like the "Servant of Jehovah" in Isaiah, has a double significance. The sufferings of the elect people made them in their national character a pathetic type of the great Sufferer and Servant of the Lord, His supreme Elect. In Jesus Christ the collective destiny of Israel is attained; its prophetic ideal, the spiritual conception of its calling, is realised,—"the seed to whom it hath been promised."

Paul is not alone in his insistence on the relation of Christ to Abraham. It is announced in the first sentence of the New Testament: "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, *son of Abraham*, son of David." And it is set forth with singular beauty in the Gospel of the Infancy. Mary's song and Zacharias' prophecy recall the freedom and simplicity of an inspiration long silenced, as they tell how "the Lord hath visited and redeemed His people; He hath shown mercy to our fathers, in remembrance of His holy covenant, the oath which He sware *unto Abraham our father*." And again, "He hath helped Israel His servant in remembrance of His mercy, as He spake to our fathers, *to Abraham and to his seed* for ever."† These pious and tender souls who watched over the cradle of our Lord and stood in the dawning of His new day, instinctively cast their thoughts back to the Covenant of Abraham. In it they found matter for their songs and a warrant for their hopes, such as no ritual ordinances could furnish. Their utterances breathe a spontaneity of faith, a vernal freshness of

* Rom. xi. † Luke i. 54, 55, 68—73.

joy and hope to which the Jewish people for ages had been strangers. The dull constraint and stiffness, the harsh fanaticism of the Hebrew nature, have fallen from them. They have put on the beautiful garments of Zion, her ancient robes of praise. For the time of the Promise draws near. Abraham's Seed is now to be born; and Abraham's faith revives to meet Him. It breaks forth anew out of the dry and long-barren soil of Judaism; it is raised up to a richer and an enduring life. Paul's doctrine of Grace does but translate into logic the poetry of Mary's and Zacharias' anthems. The Testament of Abraham supplies their common theme.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DESIGN OF THE LAW.

"What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; *and it was* ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one; but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law. Howbeit the Scripture hath shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law hath been our tutor *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."—GAL. iii. 19—24.

WHAT then is the law? So the Jew might well exclaim. Paul has been doing nothing but disparage it.—"You say that the Law of Moses brings no righteousness or blessing, but only a curse; that the covenant made with Abraham ignores it, and does not admit of being in any way qualified by its provisions. What then do you make of it? Is it not God's voice that we hear in its commands? Have the sons of Abraham ever since Moses' day been wandering from the true path of faith?" Such inferences might be drawn, not unnaturally, from the Apostle's denunciation of Legalism. They were actually drawn by Marcion in the second century, in his extreme hostility to Judaism and the Old Testament.

This question must indeed have early forced itself upon Paul's mind. How could the doctrine of Salvation by Faith and the supremacy of the Abrahamic Covenant be reconciled with the Divine commission of Moses? How, on the other hand, could the displacement of the Law by the Gospel be justified, if the former too was authorised and inspired by God? Can the same God have given to men these two contrasted revelations of Himself? The answer, contained in the passage before us, is that the two revelations had different ends in view. They are complementary, not competing institutes. Of the two, the Covenant of Promise has the prior right; it points immediately to Christ. The Legal economy is ancillary thereto; it never professed to accomplish the work of grace, as the Judaists would have it do. Its office was external, but nevertheless accessory to that of the Promise. It guarded and schooled the infant heirs of Abraham's Testament, until the time of its falling due, when they should be prepared in the manhood of faith to enter on their inheritance. "The law hath been our tutor for Christ, with the intent we should be justified by faith" (ver. 24).

This aspect of the Law, under which, instead of being an obstacle to the life of faith, it is seen to subserve it, has been suggested already. "For I," the Apostle said, "*through law* died to law" (ch. ii. 19). The Law first impelled him to Christ. It constrained him to look beyond itself. Its discipline was a preparation for faith. Paul reverses the relation in which Faith and Law were set by the Judaists. They brought in the Law to perfect the unfinished work of faith (ver. 3): he made it preliminary and propædeutic. What they gave out for more advanced doctrine, he treats as the "weak rudiments," belonging to the infancy

of the sons of God (ch. iv. 1—11). Up to this point, however, the Mosaic law has been considered chiefly in a negative way, as a foil to the Covenant of grace. The Apostle has now to treat of its nature more positively and explicitly, first indeed *in contrast with the promise* (vv. 19, 20); and secondly, *in its co-operation with the promise* (vv. 22—24). Ver. 21 is the transition from the first to the second of these conceptions.

I. "For the sake of the transgressions (committed against it) * the law was added." The Promise, let us remember, was complete in itself. Its testament of grace was sealed and delivered ages before the Mosaic legislation, which could not therefore retract or modify it. The Law was "superadded," as something over and above, attached to the former revelation for a subsidiary purpose lying outside the proper scope of the Promise. What then was this purpose?

1. *For the sake of transgressions.* In other words, the object of the law of Moses was *to develope sin.* This is not the whole of the Apostle's answer; but it is the key to his explanation. This design of the Mosaic revelation determined its form and character. Here is the standpoint from which we are to estimate its working, and its relation to the kingdom of grace. The saying of Rom. v. 20 is Paul's commentary upon this sentence: "The law came in by the way, in order that the trespass (of Adam) might multiply." The same necessity is expressed in the paradox of 1 Cor. xv. 56: "The strength of sin is the law."

This enigma, as a psychological question, is resolved by the Apostle in Rom. vii. 13—24. The law acts as a spur and provocative, rousing the power of sin to

* Τῶν παραβάσεων: the definite article can scarcely mean less than this.

conscious activity. However good in itself, coming into contact with man's evil flesh, its promulgation is followed inevitably by transgression. Its commands are so many occasions for sin to come into action, to exhibit and confirm its power. So that the Law practically assumes the same relation to sin as that in which the Promise stands to righteousness and life. In its union with the Law our sinful nature perpetually "brings forth fruit unto death." And this mournful result God certainly contemplated when He gave the Law of Moses.

But are we compelled to put so harsh a sense on the Apostle's words? May we not say that the Law was imposed in order to *restrain* sin, to keep it within bounds? Some excellent interpreters read the verse in this way. It is quite true that, in respect of public morals and the outward manifestations of evil, the Jewish law acted beneficially, as a bridle upon the sinful passions. But this is beside the mark. The Apostle is thinking only of inward righteousness, that which avails before God. The wording of the clause altogether excludes the milder interpretation. *For the sake of* (χάριν, Latin *gratia*) signifies *promotion*, not *prevention*. And the word *transgression*, by its Pauline and Jewish usage, compels us to this view.* Transgression presupposes law. It is the specific form which sin takes under law—the re-action of sin against law. What was before a latent tendency, a bias of disposition, now starts to light as a flagrant, guilty fact. By bringing about repeated transgressions the Law reveals the true nature of sin, so that it "becomes exceeding sinful." It does not make matters worse; but it shows

* Comp. the reference to this word in Chapter IX., p. 143.

how bad they really are. It aggravates the disease, in order to bring it to a crisis. And this is a necessary step towards the cure.

2. The Law of Moses was therefore *a provisional dispensation*,—"added until the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made." Its object was to make itself superfluous. It "is not made for a righteous man; but for the lawless and unruly" (1 Tim. i. 9). Like the discipline and drill of a strictly governed boyhood, it was calculated to produce a certain effect on the moral nature, after the attainment of which it was no longer needed and its continuance would be injurious. The essential part of this effect lay, however, not so much in the outward regularity it imposed, as in the inner repugnancy excited by it, the consciousness of sin unsubdued and defiant. By its operation on the conscience the Law taught man his need of redemption. It thus prepared the platform for the work of Grace. The Promise had been given. The coming of the Covenant-heir was assured. But its fulfilment was far off. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise,"—and yet it was two thousand years before "Abraham's seed" came to birth. The degeneracy of the patriarch's children in the third and fourth generation showed how little the earlier heirs of the Promise were capable of receiving it. A thousand years later, when the Covenant was renewed with David, the ancient predictions seemed at last nearing their fulfilment. But no; the times were still unripe; the human conscience but half-disciplined. The bright dawn of the Davidic monarchy was overclouded. The legal yoke is made more burdensome; sore chastisements fall on the chosen people, marked out for suffering as well as honour. Prophecy has many lessons yet to

inculcate. The world's education for Christ has another millennium to run.

Nor when He came, did "the Son of man find faith in the earth"! The people of the Law had no sooner seen than they hated "Him to whom the law and the prophets gave witness." Yet, strangely enough, the very manner of their rejection showed how complete was the preparation for His coming. Two features, rarely united, marked the ethical condition of the Jewish people at this time—an intense moral consciousness, and a deep moral perversion; reverence for the Divine law, combined with an alienation from its spirit. The chapter of Paul's autobiography to which we have so often referred (Rom. vii. 7—24) is typical of the better mind of Judaism. It is the *ne plus ultra* of self-condemnation. The consciousness of sin in mankind has ripened.

3. And further, the Law of Moses revealed God's will *in a veiled and accommodated fashion*, while the Promise and the Gospel are its direct emanations. This is the inference which we draw from vv. 19, 20.

We are well aware of the extreme difficulty of this passage. Ver. 20 has received, it is computed, some four hundred and thirty distinct interpretations. Of all the "hard things our beloved brother Paul" has written, this is the very hardest. The words which make up the sentence are simple and familiar; and yet in their combination most enigmatic. And it stands in the midst of a paragraph among the most interesting and important that the Apostle ever wrote.

Let us look first at the latter clause of ver. 19: "ordained through angels, in the hand (*i.e.* by means) of a mediator." These circumstances, as the orthodox

Jew supposed, *enhanced* the glory of the Law. The pomp and formality under which Mosaism was ushered in, the presence of the angelic host to whose agency the terrific manifestations attending the Law-giving were referred, impressed the popular mind with a sense of the incomparable sacredness of the Sinaitic revelation. It was this assumption which gave its force to the climax of Stephen's speech, of which we hear an echo in these words of Paul: "who received the law at the disposition of angels—and have not kept it!" * The simplicity and informality of the Divine communion with Abraham, and again of Christ's appearance in the world and His intercourse with men, afford a striking contrast to all this.

More is hinted than is expressly said in Scripture of the part taken by the angels in the Law-giving. Deut. xxxiii. 2 † and Ps. lxviii. 17 give the most definite indications of the ancient faith of Israel on this point. But "the Angel of the Lord" is a familiar figure of Old Testament revelation. In Hebrew thought impressive physical phenomena were commonly associated with the presence of spiritual agents. ‡ The language of Heb. i. 7 and ii. 2 endorses this belief, which in no way conflicts with natural science, and is in keeping with the Christian faith.

But while such intermediacy, from the Jewish standpoint, increased the splendour and authority of the Law, believers in Christ had learned to look at the

* Acts vii. 53: comp. διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων and διαταγεὶς δι' ἀγγέλων. Stephen's last words may well have lingered in the ear of Saul. From the lips of Stephen, they were something of an *argumentum ad hominem*.

† A doubtful citation at the best: the reading of the LXX is more to the point than the Hebrew text.

‡ See the quotations from Jewish writers to this effect given by Meyer or Lightfoot.

matter otherwise.* A revelation "administered *through angels*," spoke to them of a God distant and obscured, of a people unfit for access to His presence. This is plainly intimated in the added clause, "by means of *a mediator*,"—a title commonly given to Moses, and recalling the entreaty of Exod xx. 19; Deut. v. 22—28: "The people said, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." These are the words of sinful men, receiving a law given, as the Apostle has just declared, on purpose to convict them of their sins. The form of the Mosaic revelation tended therefore in reality not to exalt the Law, but to exhibit its difference from the Promise and the distance at which it placed men from God.

The same thought is expressed, as Bishop Lightfoot aptly shows, by the figure of "the veil on Moses' face," which Paul employs with so much felicity in 2 Cor. iii. 13—18. In the external glory of the Sinaitic law-giving, as on the illuminated face of the Law-giver, there was a fading brightness, a visible lustre concealing its imperfect and transitory character. The theophanies of the Old Covenant were a magnificent veil, hiding while they revealed. Under the Law, *angels*, *Moses* came between God and man. It was God who in His own grace conveyed the promise to justified Abraham (ver. 18).†

* Comp. Heb. ii. 2—4; also Col. ii. 15: "(*scil.* God) having stripped off the principalities and powers"—the earlier forms of angelic mediation. The writer may refer on this latter passage to his note in the *Pulpit Commentary*, also to *The Expositor*, 1st series, x. 403—421.

† But the title "mediator" belongs to *Christ*, given by Paul himself—the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). (Comp. Heb. viii. 6; ix. 15; xii. 24.) Christ is so styled however under an aspect very different from that in which the word appears here. "There is one mediator," the Apostle writes

The Law employed *a mediator;* the Promise did not (ver. 19.). With this contrast in our minds we approach ver. 20. On the other side of it (ver. 21), we find Law and Promise again in sharp antithesis. The same antithesis runs through the intervening sentence. The two clauses of ver. 20 belong to the Law and Promise respectively. "Now a mediator is not of one:" that is an axiom which holds good of *the Law.* "But God is one:" this glorious truth, the first article of Israel's creed, applies to *the Promise.* Where "a mediator" is necessary, unity is wanting,—not simply in a numerical, but in a moral sense, as matter of feeling and of aim. There are separate interests, discordant views to be consulted. This was true of Mosaism. Although in substance "holy and just and good," it was by no means purely Divine. It was not the absolute religion. Not only was it defective; it contained, in the judgement of Christ, positive elements of wrong, precepts given "for the hardness of men's hearts."* It largely consisted of "carnal ordinances, imposed till the time of rectification" (Heb. ix. 10). The theocratic legislation of the Pentateuch is lacking in the unity and consistency of a perfect revelation. Its disclosures of God were refracted in a manifest degree by the atmosphere through which they passed.

"But God is one." Here again the unity is moral

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in 1 Timothy, "*who gave Himself a ransom for all,*" the one *atoning* mediator. But Christ's manifestation of God was direct, as that of Moses was not. His Person does not come between men and God, like that of the Sinaitic mediator; it brings God into immediate contact with men. Moses acted for a distant God: Christ is Immanuel, *God with us.* On the *human* side Christ is mediator (ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς); He acts for individual men with God. On the *Divine* side, He is more than mediator, being God Himself.

* Matt. xix. 8. Comp. Ezek. xx. 25.

and essential—of character and action, rather than of number. In the Promise God spoke immediately and for Himself. There was no screen to intercept the view of faith, no go-between like Moses, with God on the mountain-top shrouded in thunder-clouds and the people terrified or wantoning far below. Of all differences between the Abrahamic and Judaic types of piety this was the chief. The man of Abraham's faith sees God in His unity. The Legalist gets his religion at second-hand, mixed with undivine elements. He believes that there is one God; but his hold upon the truth is formal. There is no unity, no simplicity of faith in his conception of God. He projects on to the Divine image confusing shadows of human imperfection.

God is One: this great article of faith was the foundation of Israel's life. It forms the first sentence of the Shemá, the "Hear, O Israel" (Deut. vi. 4—9), which every pious Jew repeats twice a day, and which in literal obedience to the Law-giver's words he fixes above his house-door, and binds upon his arm and brow at the time of prayer. Three times besides has the Apostle quoted this sentence. The first of these passages, Rom. iii. 29, 30,* may help us to understand its application here. In that place he employs it as a weapon against Jewish exclusiveness. If there is but "*one* God," he argues, there can be only *one* way of justification, for Jew and Gentile alike. The inference drawn here is even more bold and singular. There is "one God," who appeared in His proper character in the Covenant with Abraham. If the Law of Moses gives us a conception of His nature in any

* Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5; also Mark xii. 29, 30; Jas. ii. 19.

wise different from this, it is because other and lower elements found a place in it. Through the whole course of revelation there is *one God*—manifest to Abraham, veiled in Mosaism, revealed again in His perfect image in "the face of Jesus Christ."

II. So far the Apostle has pursued the contrast between the systems of Law and Grace. When finally he has referred the latter rather than the former to the "one God," we naturally ask, "Is the Law then *against* the promises of God?" (ver. 21). Was the Legal dispensation a mere reaction, a retrogression from the Promise? This would be to push Paul's argument to an antinomian extreme. He hastens to protest. —"The law against the promises? Away with the thought." Not on the Apostle's premises, but on those of his opponents, did this consequence ensue. It is *they* who set the two at variance, by trying to make law do the work of grace. "For if a law had been given that could bring men to life, righteousness would verily in that case have been of law" (ver. 21). That righteousness, and therefore life, is not of law, the Apostle has abundantly shown (ch. ii. 16; iii. 10—13). Had the Law provided some efficient means of its own for winning righteousness, there would then indeed have been a conflict between the two principles. As matters stand, there is none. Law and Promise move on different planes. Their functions are distinct. Yet there is a connection between them. The design of the Law is to mediate between the Promise and its fulfilment. "The trespass" must be "multiplied," the knowledge of sin deepened, before Grace can do its office. The fever of sin has to come to its crisis, before the remedy can take effect. Law is therefore not the enemy, but the minister of Grace. It was

charged with a purpose lying beyond itself. "Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness" (Rom. x. 4).

1. For, in the first place, *the law cuts men off from all other hope of salvation.*

On the Judaistic hypothesis, "righteousness would have been of law." But quite on the contrary, "the Scripture shuts up everything under sin, that the promise might be given in the way of faith in Jesus Christ, to them that believe" (ver. 22). Condemnation inevitable, universal, was pronounced by the Divine word under the Law, not in order that men might remain crushed beneath its weight, but that, abandoning vain hopes of self-justification, they might find in Christ their true deliverer.

The Apostle is referring here to the general purport of "the Scripture." His assertion embraces the whole teaching of the Old Testament concerning human sinfulness, embodied, for example, in the chain of citations drawn out in Rom. iii. 10—18. Wherever the man looking for legal justification turned, the Scripture met him with some new command which drove him back upon the sense of his moral helplessness. It fenced him in with prohibitions; it showered on him threatenings and reproaches; it besieged him in ever narrowing circles. And if he felt less the pressure of its outward burdens, all the more was he tormented by inward disharmony and self-accusation.

Now the judgement of Scripture is not uttered against this class of men or that, against this type of sin or that. Its impeachment sweeps the entire area of human life, sounding the depths of the heart, searching every avenue of thought and desire. It makes of the world one vast prison-house, with the Law for gaoler, and mankind held fast in chains of sin, waiting for

death. In this position the Apostle had found himself (Rom. vii. 24—viii. 2); and in his own heart he saw a mirror of the world. "Every mouth was stopped, and all the world brought in guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). This condition he graphically describes in terms of his former experience, in ver. 23: "Before faith came, under law we were kept in ward, being shut up unto the faith that was to be revealed." The Law was all the while standing guard over its subjects, watching and checking every attempt to escape,* but intending to hand them over in due time to the charge of Faith. The Law posts its ordinances, like so many sentinels, round the prisoner's cell. The cordon is complete. He tries again and again to break out; the iron circle will not yield. But deliverance will yet be his. The day of Faith approaches. It dawned long ago in Abraham's Promise. Even now its light shines into his dungeon, and he hears the word of Jesus, "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace." Law, the stern gaoler, has after all been a good friend, if it has reserved him for this. It prevents the sinner escaping to a futile and illusive freedom.

In this dramatic fashion Paul shows how the Mosaic law by its ethical discipline prepared men for a life which by itself it was incapable of giving. Where Law has done its work well, it produces, as in the Apostle's earlier experience, a profound sense of personal demerit, a tenderness of conscience, a contrition of heart which makes one ready thankfully to receive "the righteousness which is of God by faith." In every age and condition of life a like effect is wrought

* Hence the *present* participle, συγκλειόμενοι (Revised reading of ver. 23), in combination with the *imperfect* of the foregoing verb, ἐφρουρούμεθα.

upon men who honestly strive to live up to an exacting moral standard. They confess their failure. They lose self-conceit. They grow "poor in spirit," willing to accept "the abundance of *the gift* of righteousness" in Jesus Christ.

Faith is trebly honoured here. It is the condition of the gift, the characteristic of its recipient (vv. 22, 24), and the end for which he was put under the charge of Law (ver. 23). "To them that believe" is "given," as it was in foretaste to Abraham (ver. 6), a righteousness unearned, and bestowed on Christ's account (ch. iii. 13; Rom. v. 17, 18); which brings with it the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, reserved in its conscious possession for Abraham's children in the faith of Christ (ch. iii. 14; iv. 4). These blessings form the commencement of that true life, whose root is a spiritual union with Christ, and which reaches on to eternity (ch. ii. 20; Rom. v. 21; vi. 23). Of such life the Law could impart nothing; but it taught men their need of it, and disposed them to accept it. This was the purpose of its institution. It was the forerunner, not the finisher, of Faith.

2. Paul makes use of a second figure to describe the office of the Law; under which he gives his final answer to the question of ver. 19. The metaphor of the gaoler is exchanged for that of *the tutor*. "The law hath been our παιδαγωγὸς for Christ." This Greek word (*boy-leader*) has no English equivalent; we have not the thing it represents. The "pedagogue" was a sort of nursery governor,—a confidential servant in the Greek household, commonly a slave, who had charge of the boy from his infancy, and was responsible for his oversight. In his food, his clothes, his home-lessons, his play, his walks—at every point the pedagogue was

required to wait upon his young charge, and to control his movements. Amongst other offices, his tutor might have to conduct the boy to school; and it has been supposed that Paul is thinking of this duty, as though he meant, "The Law has been our pedagogue, to take us to Christ, our true teacher." But he adds, "That we might be justified of faith." The "tutor" of ver. 24 is parallel to the "guard" of the last verse; he represents a distinctly disciplinary influence.

This figure implies not like the last the imprisoned condition of the subject—but *his childish, undeveloped state.* This is an advance of thought. The Law was something more than a system of restraint and condemnation. It contained an element of progress. Under the tutelage of his pedagogue the boy is growing up to manhood. At the end of its term the Law will hand over its charge mature in capacity and equal to the responsibilities of faith. "If then the Law is a παιδαγωγός, it is not hostile to Grace, but its fellow-worker; but should it continue to hold us fast when Grace has come, then it would be hostile" (Chrysostom).

Although the highest function, that of "giving life," is denied to the Law, a worthy part is still assigned to it by the Apostle. It was "a tutor to lead men to Christ." Judaism was an education for Christianity. It prepared the world for the Redeemer's coming. It drilled and moralised the religious youth of the human race. It broke up the fallow-ground of nature, and cleared a space in the weed-covered soil to receive the seed of the kingdom. Its moral regimen deepened the conviction of sin, while it multiplied its overt acts. Its ceremonial impressed on sensuous natures the idea of the Divine holiness; and its sacrificial rites gave definiteness and vividness to men's

conceptions of the necessity of atonement, failing indeed to remove sin, but awakening the need and sustaining the hope of its removal (Heb. x. 1—18).

The Law of Moses has formed in the Jewish nation a type of humanity like no other in the world. "They dwell alone," said Balaam, "and shall not be reckoned amongst the nations." Disciplined for ages under their harsh "pedagogue," this wonderful people acquired a strength of moral fibre and a spiritual sensibility that prepared them to be the religious leaders of mankind. Israel has given us David and Isaiah, Paul and John. Christ above all was "born under law—of David's seed according to flesh." The influence of Jewish minds at this present time on the world's higher thought, whether for good or evil, is incalculable; and it penetrates everywhere. The Christian Church may with increased emphasis repeat Paul's anticipation, "What will the receiving of them be, but life from the dead!" They have a great service still to do for the Lord and for His Christ. It was well for them and for us that they have "borne the yoke in their youth."

CHAPTER XV.

THE EMANCIPATED SONS OF GOD.

"But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye all are one *man* in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise."—GAL. iii. 25—29.

"FAITH has come!" At this announcement Law the tutor yields up his charge; Law the gaoler sets his prisoner at liberty. The age of servitude has passed. In truth it endured long enough. The iron of its bondage had entered into the soul. But at last Faith is come; and with it comes a new world. The clock of time cannot be put back. The soul of man will never return to the old tutelage, nor submit again to a religion of rabbinism and sacerdotalism. "We are no longer under a pedagogue;" we have ceased to be children in the nursery, schoolboys at our tasks—"ye are all sons of God." In such terms the newborn, free spirit of Christianity speaks in Paul. He had tasted the bitterness of the Judaic yoke; no man more deeply. He had felt the weight of its impossible exactions, its fatal condemnation. This sentence is a shout of deliverance. "Wretch tath I am," he had cried, "who

shall deliver me?—I give thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord; . . . for the law of the Spirit of life in Him hath freed me from the law of sin and death" (Rom. vii. 24—viii. 2).

Faith is the true emancipator of the human mind. It comes to take its place as mistress of the soul, queen in the realm of the heart; to be henceforth its spring of life, the norm and guiding principle of its activity. "The life that I live in the flesh," Paul testifies, "I live in faith." The Mosaic law—a system of external, repressive ordinances—is no longer to be the basis of religion. Law itself, and for its proper purposes, Faith honours and magnifies (Rom. iii. 31). It is in the interests of Law that the Apostle insists on the abolishment of its Judaic form. Faith is an essentially just principle, the rightful, original ground of human fellowship with God. In the age of Abraham, and even under the Mosaic régime, in the religion of the Prophets and Psalmists, faith was the quickening element, the well-spring of piety and hope and moral vigour. Now it is brought to light. It assumes its sovereignty, and claims its inheritance. Faith is come —for Christ is come, its "author and finisher."

The efficacy of faith lies in *its object*. "Works" assume an intrinsic merit in the doer; faith has its virtue in Him it trusts. It is the soul's recumbency on Christ. "Through faith in Christ Jesus," Paul goes on to say, "ye are all sons of God." Christ evokes the faith which shakes off legal bondage, leaving the age of formalism and ritual behind, and beginning for the world an era of spiritual freedom. "*In* Christ Jesus" faith has its being; He constitutes for the soul a new atmosphere and habitat, in which faith awakens to full existence, bursts the confining shell of legalism,

recognises itself and its destiny, and unfolds into the glorious consciousness of its Divine sonship.

We prefer, with Ellicott and Meyer, to attach the complement "in Christ Jesus" * to "faith" (so in A.V.), rather than to the predicate, "Ye are sons"—the construction endorsed by the *Revised* comma after "faith." The former connection, more obvious in itself, seems to us to fall in with the Apostle's line of thought. And it is sustained by the language of ver. 27. *Faith in Christ, baptism into Christ,* and *putting on Christ* are connected and correspondent expressions. The first is the spiritual principle, the ground or element of the new life; the second, its visible attestation; and the third indicates the character and habit proper thereto.

I. It is *faith in Christ* then which *constitutes us sons of God.* This principle is the foundation-stone of the Christian life.

In the Old Testament the sonship of believers lay in shadow. Jehovah was "the King, the Lord of Hosts," the "Shepherd of Israel." They are "His people, the sheep of His pasture"—"My servant Jacob," He says, "Israel whom I have chosen." If He is named *Father,* it is of the collective Israel, not the individual; otherwise the title occurs only in figure and apostrophe. The promise of this blessedness had never been explicitly given under the Covenant of Moses. The assurance quoted in 2 Cor. vi. 18 is pieced together from scattered hints of prophecy. Old-Testament faith hardly dared to dream of such a privilege as this. It is not ascribed even to Abraham. Only to the kingly

* The phrase *faith in Christ Jesus* is a link between this Epistle and those of the third and fourth groups. Comp. Col. i. 4; Eph. i. 15; 1 Tim. iii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 13; iii. 15. More frequently in this connection our "in" represents εἰς (*into*), not ἐν as here.

"Son of David" is it said, "I will be a Father unto him; and he shall be to me for a son" (2 Sam. vii. 14).

But "beloved, now are we children of God" (1 John iii. 2). The filial consciousness is the distinction of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Apostolic writings are full of it. The unspeakable dignity of this relationship, the boundless hopes which it inspires, have left their fresh impress on the pages of the New Testament. The writers are men who have made a vast discovery. They have sailed out into a new ocean. They have come upon an infinite treasure. "Thou art no longer a slave, but a son!" What exultation filled the soul of Paul and of John as they penned such words! "The Spirit of glory and of God" rested upon them.

The Apostle is virtually repeating here what he said in vv. 2—5 touching the "receiving of the Spirit," which is, he declared, the distinctive mark of the Christian state, and raises its possessor *ipso facto* above the religion of externalism. The antithesis of *flesh and spirit* now becomes that of *sonship and pupilage*. Christ Himself, in the words of Luke xi. 13, marked out the gift of "the Holy Spirit" as the bond between the "heavenly Father" and His human children. Accordingly Paul writes immediately, in ch. iv. 6, 7, of "God sending forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts" to show that we "are sons," where we find again the thought which follows here in ver. 27, viz. that *union with Christ* imparts this exalted status. This is after all the central conception of the Christian life. Paul has already stated it as the sum of his own experience: "Christ lives in me" (ch. ii. 20). "I have put on Christ" is the same thing in other words. In ch. ii. 20 he contemplates the union as an inner, vitalising

force; here it is viewed as matter of status and condition. The believer is *invested with Christ.* He enters into the filial estate and endowments, since he is *in Christ Jesus.* "For if Christ is Son of God, and thou hast put on Him, having the Son in thyself and being made like to Him, thou wast brought into one kindred and one form of being with Him" (Chrysostom).

This was true of "so many as were baptized into Christ"—an expression employed not in order to limit the assertion, but to extend it coincidently with the "all" of ver. 26. There was no difference in this respect between the circumcised and uncircumcised. Every baptized Galatian was a son of God. Baptism manifestly presupposes faith. To imagine that the *opus operatum,* the mechanical performance of the rite apart from faith present or anticipated in the subject, "clothes us with Christ," is to hark back to Judaism. It is to substitute baptism for circumcision—a difference merely of form, so long as the doctrine of ritual regeneration remains the same. This passage is as clear a proof as could well be desired, that in the Pauline vocabulary "baptized" is synonymous with "believing." The baptism of these Galatians solemnised their spiritual union with Christ. It was the public acceptance, in trust and submission, of God's covenant of grace—for their children haply, as well as for themselves.

In the case of the infant, the household to which it belongs, the religious community which receives it to be nursed in its bosom, stand sponsors for its faith. On them will rest the blame of broken vows and responsibility disowned, if their baptized children are left to lapse into ignorance of Christ's claims upon them. The Church which practises infant baptism assumes a very serious obligation. If it takes no sufficient care to

have the rite made good, if children pass through its laver to remain unmarked and unshepherded, it is sinning against Christ. Such administration makes His ordinance an object of superstition, or of contempt.

The baptism of the Galatians signalised their entrance "into Christ," the union of their souls with the dying, risen Lord. They were "baptized," as Paul phrases it elsewhere, "into His death," to "walk" henceforth with Him "in newness of life." By its very form—the normal and most expressive form of primitive baptism, the descent into and rising from the symbolic waters—it pictured the soul's death with Christ, its burial and its resurrection in Him, its separation from the life of sin and entrance upon the new career of a regenerated child of God (Rom. vi. 3—14). This power attended the ordinance "through faith in the operation of God who raised Christ from the dead" (Col. ii. 11—13). Baptism had proved to them "the laver of regeneration" in virtue of "the renewing of the Holy Spirit," under those spiritual conditions of accepted mercy and "justification by grace through faith,"* without which it is a mere law-work, as useless as any other. It was the outward and visible sign of the inward transaction which made the Galatian believers sons of God and heirs of life eternal. It was therefore a "putting on of Christ," a veritable assumption of the Christian character, the filial relationship to God. Every such baptism announced to heaven and earth the passage of another soul from servitude to freedom, from death unto life, the birth of a brother into the family of God. From this day the new convert was a member incorporate of the Body of Christ,

* Rom. vi. 1, 2; Tit. iii. 4—7 ("not of *works*. . . that we had done)."

affianced to his Lord, not alone in the secret vows of his heart, but pledged to Him before his fellow-men. He had *put on Christ*—to be worn in his daily life, while He dwelt in the shrine of his spirit. And men would see Christ in him, as they see the robe upon its wearer, the armour glittering on the soldier's breast.

By receiving Christ, inwardly accepted in faith, visibly assumed in baptism, we are made sons of God. *He* makes us free of the house of God, where He rules as Son, and where no slave may longer stay. Those who called themselves "Abraham's seed" and yet were "slaves of sin," must be driven from the place in God's household which they dishonoured, and must forfeit their abused prerogatives. They were not Abraham's children, for they were utterly unlike him; the Devil surely was their father, whom by their lusts they featured. So Christ declared to the unbelieving Jews (John viii. 31—44). And so the Apostle identifies the children of Abraham with the sons of God, by faith united to "the Son." Alike in the historical sonship toward Abraham and the supernatural sonship toward God, Christ is the ground of filiation. Our sonship is grafted upon His. He is "the vine," we "branches" in Him. He is *the* seed of Abraham, *the* Son of God; we, sons of God and Abraham's seed—"if we are Christ's." Through Him we derive from God; through Him all that is best in the life of humanity comes down to us. Christ is the central stock, the spiritual root of the human race. His manifestation reveals God to man, and man also to himself. In Jesus Christ we regain the Divine image, stamped upon us in Him at our creation (Col. i. 15, 16; iii. 10, 11), the filial likeness to God which constitutes man's proper nature. Its attainment is the essential blessing, the promise

which descended from Abraham along the succession of faith.

Now this dignity belongs universally to Christian faith. "Ye are *all*," the Apostle says, "sons of God through faith in Him." Sonship is a human, not a Jewish distinction. The discipline Israel had endured, it endured for the world. The Gentiles have no need to pass through it again. Abraham's blessing, when it came, was to embrace "all the families of the earth." The new life in Christ in which it is realised, is as large in scope as it is complete in nature. "Faith in Christ Jesus" is a condition that opens the door to every human being,—"Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female." If then baptized, believing Gentiles are sons of God, they stand already on a level higher than any to which Mosaism raised its professors. "Putting on Christ," they are robed in a righteousness brighter and purer than that of the most blameless legalist. What can Judaism do for them more? How could they wish to cover their glorious dress with its faded, worn-out garments? To add circumcision to their faith would be not to rise, but to sink from the state of sons to that of serfs.

II. On this first principle of the new life there rests a second. The sons of God are brethren to each other. Christianity is the perfection of society, as well as of the individual. *The faith of Christ restores the broken unity of mankind.* "In Christ Jesus there is no Jew or Greek; there is no bondman or freeman; there is no male and female. You are all one in Him."

The Galatian believer at his baptism had entered a communion which gave him for the first time the sense of a common humanity. In Jesus Christ he found a bond of union with his fellows, an identity of interest

and aim so commanding that in its presence secular differences appeared as nothing. From the height to which his Divine adoption raised him these things were invisible. Distinctions of race, of rank, even that of sex, which bulk so largely in our outward life and are sustained by all the force of pride and habit, are forgotten here. These dividing lines and party-walls have no power to sunder us from Christ, nor therefore from each other in Christ. The tide of Divine love and joy which through the gate of faith poured into the souls of these Gentiles of "many nations," submerged all barriers. They are one in the brotherhood of the eternal life. When one says "I am a child of God," one no longer thinks, "I am a Greek or Jew, rich or poor, noble or ignoble—man or woman." A son of God!—that sublime consciousness fills his being.

Paul, to be sure, does not mean that these differences have ceased to exist. He fully recognises them; and indeed insists strongly on the proprieties of sex, and on the duties of civil station. He values his own Jewish birth and Roman citizenship. But "in Christ Jesus" he "counts them refuse" (Phil. iii. 4—8). Our relations to God, our heritage in Abraham's Testament, depend on our faith in Christ Jesus and our possession of His Spirit. Neither birth nor office affects this relationship in the least degree. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14). This is the Divine criterion of churchmanship, applied to prince or beggar, to archbishop or sexton, with perfect impartiality. "God is no respecter of persons."

This rule of the Apostle's was a new principle in religion, pregnant with immense consequences. The Stoic cosmopolitan philosophy made a considerable

approach to it, teaching as it did the worth of the moral person and the independence of virtue upon outward conditions. Buddhism previously, and Mohammedanism subsequently, each in its own way, addressed themselves to man as man, declaring all believers equal and abolishing the privileges of race and caste. To their recognition of human brotherhood the marvellous victories won by these two creeds are largely due. These religious systems, with all their errors, were a signal advance upon Paganism with its "gods many and lords many," its local and national deities, whose worship belittled the idea of God and turned religion into an engine of hostility instead of a bond of union amongst men.

Greek culture, moreover, and Roman government, as it has often been observed, had greatly tended to unify mankind. They diffused a common atmosphere of thought and established one imperial law round the circuit of the Mediterranean shores. But these conquests of secular civilization, the victories of arms and arts, were achieved at the expense of religion. Polytheism is essentially barbarian. It flourishes in division and in ignorance. To bring together its innumerable gods and creeds was to bring them all into contempt. The *one law*, the *one learning* now prevailing in the world, created a void in the conscience of mankind, only to be filled by the *one faith*. Without a centre of spiritual unity, history shows that no other union will endure. But for Christianity, the Græco-Roman civilization would have perished, trampled out by the feet of Goths and Huns.

The Jewish faith failed to meet the world's demand for a universal religion. It could never have saved European society. Nor was it designed for such a

purpose. True, its Jehovah was "the God of the whole earth." The teaching of the Old Testament, as Paul easily showed, had a universal import and brought all men within the scope of its promises. But in its actual shape and its positive institutions it was still tribal and exclusive. Mosaism planted round the family of Abraham a fence of ordinances, framed of set purpose to make them a separate people and preserve them from heathen contamination. This system, at first maintained with difficulty, in course of time gained control of the Israelitish nature, and its exclusiveness was aggravated by every device of Pharisaic ingenuity. Without an entire transformation, without in fact ceasing to be Judaism, the Jewish religion was doomed to isolation. Under the Roman Empire, in consequence of the ubiquitous dispersion of the Jews, it spread far and wide. It attracted numerous and influential converts. But these proselytes never were, and never could have been generally amalgamated with the sacred people. They remained in the outer court, worshipping the God of Israel "afar off" (Eph. ii. 11—22; iii. 4—6).

This particularism of the Mosaic system was, to Paul's mind, a proof of its temporary character. The abiding faith, the faith of "Abraham and his seed," must be broad as humanity. It could know nothing of Jew and Gentile, of master and slave, nor even of man and woman; it knows only *the soul and God.* The gospel of Christ allied itself thus with the nascent instinct of humanity, the fellow-feeling of the race. It adopted the sentiment of the Roman poet, himself an enfranchised slave, who wrote: *Homo sum, et humani a me nil alienum puto.* In our religion human kinship at last receives adequate expression. The Son of man lays the foundation of a world-wide fraternity. The

one Father claims all men for His sons in Christ. A new, tenderer, holier humanity is formed around His cross. Men of the most distant climes and races, coming across their ancient battle-fields, clasp each other's hands and say, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

The practice of the Church has fallen far below the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles. In this respect Mohammedans and Buddhists might teach Christian congregations a lesson of fraternity. The arrangements of our public worship seem often designed expressly to emphasize social distinctions, and to remind the poor man of his inequality. Our native *hauteur* and conventionality are nowhere more painfully conspicuous than in the house of God. English Christianity is seamed through and through with caste-feeling. This lies at the root of our sectarian jealousies. It is largely due to this cause that the social ideal of Jesus Christ has been so deplorably ignored, and that a frank brotherly fellowship amongst the Churches is at present impossible. Sacerdotalism first destroyed the Christian brotherhood by absorbing in the official ministry the functions of the individual believer. And the Protestant Reformation has but partially re-established these prerogatives. Its action has been so far too exclusively negative and *protestant*, too little constructive and creative. It has allowed itself to be secularised and identified with existing national limitations and social distinctions. How greatly has the authority of our faith and the influence of the Church suffered from this error. The filial consciousness should produce *the fraternal consciousness*. With the former we may have a number of private Christians; with the latter only can we have a Church.

"Ye are all," says the Apostle, "one (man) in Christ Jesus." The numeral is masculine, not neuter—*one person* (no abstract unity),* as though possessing one mind and will, and that "the mind that was in Christ." Just so far as individual men are "in Christ" and He becomes the soul of their life, do they realise this unity. The Christ within them recognises the Christ without, as "face answereth to face in a glass." In this recognition social disparity vanishes. We think of it no more than we shall do before the judgement-seat of Christ. What matters it whether my brother wears velvet or fustian, if Christ be in him? The humbleness of his birth or occupation, the uncouthness of his speech, cannot separate him, nor can the absence of these peculiarities separate his neighbour, from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Why should these differences make them strangers to each other in the Church? If both are *in Christ*, why are they not *one in Christ?* A tide of patriotic emotion, a scene of pity or terror—a shipwreck, an earthquake—levels all classes and makes us feel and act as one man. Our faith in Christ should do no less. Or do we love God less than we fear death? Is our country more to us than Jesus Christ? In rare moments of exaltation we rise, it may be, to the height at which Paul sets our life. But until we can habitually and by settled principle in our Church-relations "know no man after the flesh," we come short of the purpose of Jesus Christ (comp. John xvii. 20—23).

The unity Paul desiderates would effectually counteract the Judaistic agitation. The force of the latter lay in antipathy. Paul's opponents contended that there

* Comp. Eph. ii. 15; iv. 13; but *neuter* in ii. 14.

must be "Jew and Greek." They fenced off the Jewish preserve from uncircumcised intruders. Gentile non-conformists must adopt their ritual; or they will remain a lower caste, outside the privileged circle of the covenant-heirs of Abraham. Compelled under this pressure to accept the Mosaic law, it was anticipated that they would add to the glory of Judaism and help to maintain its institutions unimpaired. But the Apostle has cut the ground from under their feet. It is *faith*, he affirms, which makes men sons of God. And faith is equally possible to Jew or Gentile. Then Judaism is doomed. No system of caste, no principle of social exclusion has, on this assumption, any foothold in the Church. Spiritual life, nearness and likeness to the common Saviour —in a word *character*, is the standard of worth in His kingdom. And the range of that kingdom is made wide as humanity; its charity, deep as the love of God.

And "if you—whether Jews or Greeks—are Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, heirs in terms of the Promise." So the Apostle brings to a close this part of his argument, and links it to what he has said before touching the fatherhood of Abraham. Since ver. 18 we have lost sight of the patriarch; but he has not been forgotten. From that verse Paul has been conducting us onward through the legal centuries which parted Abraham from Christ. He has shown how the law of of Moses interposed between promise and fulfilment, schooling the Jewish race and mankind in them for its accomplishment. Now the long discipline is over. The hour of release has struck. Faith resumes her ancient sway, in a larger realm. In Christ a new, universal humanity comes into existence, formed of men who by faith are grafted into Him. Partakers of

Christ, Gentiles also are of the seed of Abraham; the wild scions of nature share "the root and fatness of the good olive-tree." All things are theirs; for they are Christ's (1 Cor. iii. 21—23).

Christ never stands alone. "In the midst of the Church—firstborn of many brethren" He presents Himself, standing "in the presence of God for us." He has secured for mankind and keeps in trust its glorious heritage. In Him we hold in fee the ages past and to come. The sons of God are heirs of the universe.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HEIR'S COMING OF AGE.

"But I say that so long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant, though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the term appointed of the father. So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God."—GAL. iv. 1—7.

THE main thesis of the Epistle is now established. Gentile Christians, Paul has shown, are in the true Abrahamic succession of faith. And this devolution of the Promise discloses the real intent of the Mosaic law, as an intermediate and disciplinary system. Christ was the heir of Abraham's testament; He was therefore the end of Moses' law. And those who are Christ's inherit the blessings of the Promise, while they escape the curse and condemnation of the Law. The remainder of the Apostle's polemic, down to ch. v. 12, is devoted to the illustration and enforcement of this position.

In this, as in the previous chapter, the pre-Christian state is assigned to the Jew, who was the chief subject of Divine teaching in the former dispensation; it is set forth under the first person (ver. 3), in the language of

recollection. Describing the opposite condition of sonship, the Apostle reverts from the first to the second person, identifying his readers with himself (comp. ch. iii. 25, 26). True, the Gentiles had been in bondage (vv. 7, 8). This goes without saying. Paul's object is to show that *Judaism* is a bondage. Upon this he insists with all the emphasis he can command. Moreover, the legal system contained worldly, unspiritual elements, crude and childish conceptions of truth, marking it, in comparison with Christianity, as an inferior religion. Let the Galatians be convinced of this, and they will understand what Paul is going to say directly; they will perceive that Judaic conformity is for them a backsliding in the direction of their former heathenism (vv. 8—10). But the force of this latter warning is discounted and its effect weakened when he is supposed, as by some interpreters, to include *Gentile* along with Jewish "rudiments" already in ver. 3. His readers could not have suspected this. The "So we also" and the "held in bondage" of this verse carry them back to ch. iii. 23. By calling the Mosaic ceremonies "rudiments of *the world*" he gives Jewish susceptibilities just such a shock as prepares for the declaration of ver. 9, which puts them on a level with heathen rites.

The difference between Judaism and Christianity, historically unfolded in ch. iii., is here restated in graphic summary. We see, first, *the heir of God in his minority;* and again, *the same heir in possession of his estate.*

I. One can fancy the Jew replying to Paul's previous argument in some such style as this. "You pour contempt," he would say, "on the religion of your fathers. You make them out to have been no better

than slaves. Abraham's inheritance, you pretend, under the Mosaic dispensation lay dormant, and is revived in order to be taken from his children and conferred on aliens." No, Paul would answer: I admit that the saints of Israel were sons of God; I glory in the fact—"who are Israelites, whose is *the adoption of sons* and the glory and the covenants and the law-giving and the promises, whose are the fathers" (Rom. ix. 4, 5). *But they were sons in their minority.* "And I say that as long as the heir is (legally) an infant, he differs in nothing from a slave, though (by title) lord of all."

The man of the Old Covenant was a child of God *in posse*, not *in esse*, in right but not in fact. The "infant" is his father's trueborn son. In time he will be full owner. Meanwhile he is as subject as any slave on the estate. There is nothing he can command for his own. He is treated and provided for as a bondman might be; put "under stewards" who manage his property, "and guardians" in charge of his person, "until the day fore-appointed of the father." This situation does not exclude, it implies fatherly affection and care on the one side, and heirship on the other. But it forbids the recognition of the heir, his investment with filial rights. It precludes the access to the father and acquaintance with him, which the boy will gain in after years. He sees him at a distance and through others, under the aspect of authority rather than of love. In this position he does not yet possess the spirit of a son. Such was in truth the condition of Hebrew saints—heirs of God, but knowing it not.

This illustration raises in ver. 2 an interesting legal question, touching the latitude given by Roman or other current law to the father in dealing with his

heirs. Paul's language is good evidence for the existence of the power he refers to. In Roman and in Jewish law the date of civil majority was fixed. Local usage may have been more elastic. But the case supposed, we observe, is not that of a *dead* father, into whose place the son steps at the proper age. A grant is made by a father *still living*, who keeps his son in pupilage till he sees fit to put him in possession of the promised estate. There is nothing to show that paternal discretion was limited in these circumstances, any more than it is in English law. The father might fix eighteen, or twenty-one, or thirty years as the age at which he would give his son a settlement, just as he thought best.

This analogy, like that of the "testament" in ch. iii., is not complete at all points; nor could any human figure of these Divine things be made so. The essential particulars involved in it are first, *the childishness of the infant heir;* secondly, *the subordinate position in which he is placed for the time;* and thirdly, *the right of the father to determine the expiry of his infancy.*

1. "When we were children," says the Apostle. This implies, not a merely formal and legal bar, but an intrinsic disqualification. To treat the child as a man is preposterous. The responsibilities of property are beyond his strength and his understanding. Such powers in his hands could only be instruments of mischief, to himself most of all. In the Divine order, calling is suited to capacity, privilege to age. The coming of Christ was timed to the hour. The world of the Old Testament, at its wisest and highest, was unripe for His gospel. The revelation made to Paul could not have been received by Moses, or David, or Isaiah. His doctrine was only possible after and in

consequence of theirs. There was a training of faculty, a deepening of conscience, a patient course of instruction and chastening to be carried out, before the heirs of the promise were fit for their heritage. Looking back to his own youthful days, the Apostle sees in them a reflex of the discipline which the people of God had required. The views he then held of Divine truth appear to him low and childish, in comparison with the manly freedom of spirit, the breadth of knowledge, the fulness of joy which he has attained as a son of God through Christ.

2. But what is meant by the "stewards and guardians" of this Jewish period of infancy? Ver. 3 tells us this, in language, however, somewhat obscure: "We were held in bondage under *the rudiments* (or *elements*) *of the world*"—a phrase synonymous with the foregoing "under law" (ch. iii. 23). The "guard" and "tutor" of the previous section re-appears, with these "rudiments of the world" in his hand. They form the system under which the young heir was schooled, up to the time of his majority. They belonged to "the world"* inasmuch as they were, in comparison with Christianity, unspiritual in their nature, uninformed by "the Spirit of God's Son" (ver. 6). The language of Heb. ix. 1, 10 explains this phrase: "The first covenant had a *worldly* sanctuary," with "ordinances of flesh, imposed till the time of rectification." The sensuous factor that entered into the Jewish revelation formed the point of contact with Paganism which Paul

* Surely *the world of men*, not the cosmical elements; comp. Col. ii. 8. 20 (where *rudiments of the world* is parallel to *tradition of men*); also Gal. vi. 14; Heb. ix. 1. 1 Cor. iii. 1—3 supplies an interesting parallel: those who are *babes in Christ*, are so far carnal and walk *according to man*, animated by *the spirit of this world* (1 Cor. ii. 12).

brings into view in the next paragraph. Yet rude and earthly as the Mosaic system was in some of its features, it was Divinely ordained and served an essential purpose in the progress of revelation. It shielded the Church's infancy. It acted the part of a prudent steward, a watchful guardian. The heritage of Abraham came into possession of his heirs enriched by their long minority. Mosaism therefore, while spiritually inferior to the Covenant of grace in Christ, has rendered invaluable service to it (comp. ver. 24: Chapter XIV., p. 225).

3. *The will of the Father* determined the period of this guardianship. However it may be in human law, this right of fore-ordination resides in the Divine Fatherhood. In His unerring foresight He fixed the hour when His sons should step into their filial place. All such "times and seasons," Christ declared, "the Father hath appointed on His own authority" (Acts i. 7). He imposed the law of Moses, and annulled it, when He would. He kept the Jewish people, for their own and the world's benefit, tied to the legal "rudiments," held in the leading-strings of Judaism. It was His to say when this subjection should cease, when the Church might receive the Spirit of His Son. If this decree appeared to be arbitrary, if it was strange that the Jewish fathers—men so noble in faith and character—were kept in bondage and fear, we must remind ourselves that "so it seemed good in the Father's sight." Hebrew pride found this hard to brook. To think that God had denied this privilege in time past to His chosen people, to bestow it all at once and by mere grace on Gentile sinners, making them at "the eleventh hour" equal to those who had borne for so long the burden and heat of the day! that the children

of Abraham had been, as Paul maintains, for centuries treated as *slaves*, and now these heathen aliens are made *sons* just as much as they! But this was God's plan; and it must be right. "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?"

II. However, the nonage of the Church has passed. God's sons are now to be owned for such. *It is Christ's mission to constitute men sons of God* (vv. 4, 5).

His advent was the turning-point of human affairs, "the fulness of time." Paul's glance in these verses takes in a vast horizon. He views Christ in His relation both to God and to humanity, both to law and redemption. The appearance of "the Son of God, woman-born," completes the previous course of time; it is the goal of antecedent revelation, unfolding "the mystery kept secret through times eternal," but now "made known to all the nations" (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). Promise and Law both looked forward to this hour. Sin had been "passed by" in prospect of it, receiving hitherto a partial and provisional forgiveness. The aspirations excited, the needs created by earlier religion demanded their satisfaction. The symbolism of type and ceremony, with their rude picture-writing, waited for their Interpreter. The prophetic soul of "the wide world, dreaming of things to come," watched for this day. They that looked for Israel's redemption, the Simeons and Annas of the time, the authentic heirs of the promise, knew by sure tokens that it was near. Their aged eyes in the sight of the infant Jesus descried its rising. The set time had come, to which all times looked since Adam's fall and the first promise. At the moment when Israel seemed farthest from help and hope, the "horn of salvation was raised up in the house of David,"—*God sent forth His Son.*

1. *The sending of the Son* brought the world's servitude to an end. "Henceforth," said Jesus, "I call you not servants" (John xv. 15). Till now "servant of God" had been the highest title men could wear. The heathen were enslaved to false gods (ver. 8). And Israel, knowing the true God, knew Him at a distance, serving too often in the spirit of the elder son of the parable, who said, "Lo these many years do I *slave* for thee" (Luke xv. 29). None could with free soul lift his eyes to heaven and say, "Abba, Father." Men had great thoughts about God, high speculations. They had learnt imperishable truths concerning His unity, His holiness, His majesty as Creator and Lawgiver. They named Him the "Lord," the "Almighty," the "I AM." But His *Fatherhood* as Christ revealed it, they had scarcely guessed. They thought of Him as humble bondmen of a revered and august master, as sheep might of a good shepherd. The idea of a personal *sonship* towards the Holy One of Israel was inconceivable, till Christ brought it with Him into the world, till *God sent forth His Son.*

He sent Him as "His Son." To speak of Christ, with the mystical Germans, as the *ideal Urmensch*—the ideal Son of man, the foretype of humanity—is to express a great truth. Mankind was created in Christ, who is "the image of God, firstborn of all creation." But this is not what Paul is saying here. The doubly compounded Greek verb at the head of this sentence (repeated with like emphasis in ver. 6) signifies "sent forth from" Himself: He came in the character of *God's* Son, bringing His sonship with Him. He was the Son of God before He was sent out. He did not become so in virtue of His mission to mankind. His relations with men, in Paul's conception, rested upon

His pre-existing relationship to God. "The Word" who "became flesh, was with God, was God in the beginning." "He called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (John v. 18): so the Jews had gathered from His own declarations. Paul admitted the claim when "God revealed His Son" to him, and affirms it here unequivocally.

"The Son of God," arriving "in the fulness of time," enters human life. Like any other son of man, He is *born of a woman, born under law.* Here is the *kenosis*, the emptying of Divinity, of which the Apostle speaks in Phil. ii. 5—8. The phrase "born of woman," does not refer specifically to the *virgin-birth;* this term describes human origin on the side of its weakness and dependence" (Job xiv. 1; Matt. xi. 11). Paul is thinking not of the difference, but of the identity of Christ's birth and our own. We are carried back to Bethlehem. We see Jesus a babe lying in His mother's arms—*God's Son a human infant,* drawing His life from a weak woman!*

Nor is "born under law" a distinction intended to limit the previous term, as though it meant a *born Jew,* and not a mere woman's son. This expression, to the mind of the reader of ch. iii., conveys the idea of *subjection*, of humiliation rather than eminence. "Though He was (God's) Son," Christ must needs "learn His obedience" (Heb. v. 8). The Jewish people experienced above all others the power of the law to chasten and humble. Their law was to them more sensibly, what the moral law is in varying degree to the world everywhere, an instrument of condemnation. God's Son was now put under its power. As a man He was

* Comp. Rom. i. 3, 4; ix. 5; 2 Cor. xiii. 4; Eph. iv. 9, 10; Ph. ii. 6—8; Col. i. 15, 18; ii. 9; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

"under law;" as a Jew He came under its most stringent application. He declined none of the burdens of His birth. He submitted not only to the general moral demands of the Divine law for men, but to all the duties and proprieties incident to His position as a man, even to those ritual ordinances which His coming was to abolish. He set a perfect example of loyalty. "Thus it becometh us," He said, "to fulfil all righteousness."

The Son of God who was to end the legal bondage, was sent into it Himself. He wore the legal yoke that He might break it. He took "the form of a servant," to win our enfranchisement. "God sent forth His Son, human, law-bound—that He might *redeem those under law*."

Redemption was Christ's errand. We have learned already how "He redeemed us from the curse of the law," by the sacrifice of the cross (ch. iii. 13). This was the primary object of His mission: to ransom men from the guilt of past sin. Now we discern its further purpose—the positive and constructive side of the Divine counsel. Justification is the preface to *adoption*. The man "under law" is not only cursed by his failure to keep it; he lives in a servile state, debarred from filial rights. Christ "bought us out" of this condition. While the expiation rendered in His death clears off the entail of human guilt, His incarnate life and spiritual union with believing men sustain that action, making the redemption complete and permanent. As enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son;" now "reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10). Salvation is not through the death of Christ alone. The Babe of Bethlehem, the crowned Lord of glory is our Redeemer, as well as the

Man of Calvary. The cross is indeed the centre of His redemption; but it has a vast circumference. All that Christ is, all that He has done and is doing as the Incarnate Son, the God-man, helps to make men sons of God. The purpose of His mission is therefore stated a second time and made complete in the words of ver. 5 *b*: "that we might *receive the adoption of sons*." The sonship carries everything else with it—"if children, then heirs" (ver. 7). There is no room for any supplementary office of Jewish ritual. That is left behind with our babyhood.

2. So much for the ground of sonship. Its proof lay in the *sending forth of the Spirit of the Son*.

The mission of the Son and that of the Spirit are spoken of in vv. 3—6 in parallel terms: "God *sent forth* His Son—*sent forth* the Spirit of His Son," the former into the world of men, the latter "into" their individual "hearts." The second act matches the first, and crowns it. Pentecost is the sequel of the Incarnation (John ii. 21; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). And Pentecost is repeated in the heart of every child of God. The Apostle addresses himself to his readers' experience ("because *ye* are sons") as in ch. iii. 3—6, and on the same point. They had "received the Spirit:" this marked them indubitably as heirs of Abraham (ch. iii. 14)—and what is more, sons of God. Had not the mystic cry, *Abba, Father*, sounded in their hearts? The filial consciousness was born within them, supernaturally inspired. When they believed in Christ, when they saw in Him the Son of God, their Redeemer, they were stirred with a new, ecstatic impulse; a Divine glow of love and joy kindled in their breasts; a voice not their own spoke to their spirit—their soul leaped forth upon their lips, crying to God, "Father,

Father!" They were children of God, and knew it. "The Spirit Himself bore them witness" (Rom. viii. 15).

This sentiment was not due to their own reflection, not the mere opening of a buried spring of feeling in their nature. *God sent it* into their hearts. The outward miracles which attended the first bestowment of this gift, showed from what source it came (ch. iii. 5). Nor did Christ personally impart the assurance. He had gone, that the Paraclete might come. Here was another Witness, sent by a second mission from the Father (John xvi. 7). His advent is signalised in clear distinction from that of the Son. He comes in the joint name of Father and of Son. Jesus called Him "the Spirit of the Father;" * the Apostle, "the Spirit of God's Son."

To us He is "the Spirit of adoption," replacing the former "spirit of bondage unto fear." For by His indwelling we are "joined to the Lord" and made "one spirit" with Him, so that Christ lives in us (ch. ii. 20). And since Christ is above all things the Son, His Spirit is a spirit of sonship; those who receive Him are sons of God. Our sonship is through the Holy Spirit derived from His. Till Christ's redemption was effected, such adoption was in the nature of things impossible. This filial cry of Gentile hearts attested the entrance of a Divine life into the world. The Spirit of God's Son had become the new spirit of mankind.

Abba, the Syrian vocative for *father*, was a word familiar to the lips of Jesus. The instance of its use recorded in Mark xiv. 36, was but one of many such. No one had hitherto approached God as He did. His

* Matt. x. 20; Luke xi. 13; John xiv. 16; Acts i. 4, 5.

utterance of this word, expressing the attitude of His life of prayer and breathing the whole spirit of His religion, profoundly affected His disciples. So that the *Abba* of Jesus became a watchword of His Church, being the proper name of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gentile believers pronounced it, conscious that in doing so they were joined in spirit to the Lord who said, "My Father, and your Father!" Greek-speaking Christians supplemented it by their own equivalent, as we by the English *Father*. This precious vocable is carried down the ages and round the whole world in the mother-tongue of Jesus, a memorial of the hour when through Him men learned to call God Father.

"Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit," with this cry. The witness of sonship follows on the adoption, and seals it. The child is born, then cries; the cry is the evidence of life. But this is not the first office of the Holy Spirit to the regenerate soul. Many a silent impulse has He given, frequent and long continued may have been His visitations, before His presence reveals itself audibly. From the first the new life of grace is implanted by His influence. "That which is *born of the Spirit*, is spirit." "He dwelleth with you, and *is in you*," * said Jesus to His disciples, before the Pentecostal effusion. Important and decisive as the witness of the Holy Spirit to our sonship is, we must not limit His operation to this event. Deeply has He wrought already on the soul in which His work reaches this issue; and when it is reached, He has still much to bestow, much to accomplish in us. All truth, all holiness, all comfort are His; and into these He leads

* John xiv. 17; the *present* (ἐστίν) is the preferable reading. See Westcott *ad loc.*

the children of God. Living by the Spirit, in Him we proceed to walk (ch. v. 25).

The interchange of person in the subject of vv. 5—8 is very noticeable. This agitated style betrays high-strung emotion. Writing first, in ver. 3, in the language of Jewish experience, in ver. 6 Paul turns upon his readers and claims them for witnesses to the same adoption which Jewish believers in Christ (ver. 5) had received. Instantly he falls back into the first person; it is his own joyous consciousness that breaks forth in the filial cry of ver. 6 *b*. In the more calm concluding sentence the second person is resumed; and now in the individualising singular, as though he would lay hold of his readers one by one, and bid them look each into his own heart to find the proof of sonship, as he writes: "So that thou art no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, also an heir through God."

An heir through God—this is the true reading, and is greatly to the point. It carries to a climax the emphatic repetition of "God" observed in vv. 4 and 6. "*God* sent His Son" into the world; "*God* sent" in turn "His Son's Spirit into your hearts." God then, and no other, has bestowed your inheritance. It is yours by His fiat. Who dares challenge it?* Words how suitable to reassure Gentile Christians, browbeaten by arrogant Judaism! Our reply is the same to those who at this day deny our Christian and churchly standing, because we reject their sacerdotal claims.

What this inheritance includes in its final attainment, "doth not yet appear." Enough to know that "now are we children of God." The redemption of the body, the deliverance of nature from its sentence of dissolu-

* Comp. Rom. viii. 31—35; Acts xi. 17.

tion, the abolishment of death—these are amongst its certainties. Its supreme joy lies in the promise of being with Christ, to witness and share His glory.* "Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ"—a destiny like this overwhelms thought and makes hope a rapture. God's sons may be content to wait and see how their heritage will turn out. Only let us be sure that we are His sons. Doctrinal orthodoxy, ritual observance, moral propriety do not impart, and do not supersede "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." The religion of Jesus the Son of God is the religion of the filial consciousness.

* John xii. 26; xvii. 24; Rev. iii. 21; Phil. i. 23; Col. iii. 4; 1 Pet. v. 1.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RETURN TO BONDAGE.

"Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them which by nature are no gods: but now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again? Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain"—GAL. iv. 8—11.

"SONS of God, whom He made His heirs in Christ, how are you turning back to legal bondage!" Such is the appeal with which the Apostle follows up his argument. "Foolish Galatians," we seem to hear him say again, "who has bewitched you into this?" They forget the call of the Divine grace; they turn away from the sight of Christ crucified; nay, they are renouncing their adoption into the family of God. Paul knew something of the fickleness of human nature; but he was not prepared for this. How can men who have tasted liberty prefer slavery, or full-grown sons desire to return to the "rudiments" of childhood? After knowing God as He is in Christ, is it possible that these Galatians have begun to dote on ceremonial, to make a religion of "times and seasons;" that they are becoming devotees of Jewish ritual? What can be more frivolous, more irrational than this? On such people Paul's labours seem to be thrown away.

"You make me fear," he says, "that I have toiled for you in vain."

In this expostulation two principles emerge with especial prominence.

I. First, that *knowledge of God, bringing spiritual freedom, lays upon us higher responsibilities.* "Then indeed," he says, "not knowing God, you were in bondage to false gods. Your heathen life was in a sense excusable. But now something very different is expected from you, since you have come to know God."

We are reminded of the Apostle's memorable words spoken at Athens: "The times of ignorance God overlooked" (Acts xvii. 30). "Ye say, We see," said Jesus; "your sin remaineth" (John ix. 41). Increased light brings stricter judgement. If this was true of men who had merely heard the message of Christ, how much more of those who had proved its saving power. Ritualism was well enough for Pagans, or even for Jews before Christ's coming and the outpouring of His Spirit—but for Christians! For those into whose hearts God had breathed the Spirit of His Son, who had learned to "worship God in the Spirit and to have no confidence in the flesh"—for Paul's Galatians to yield to the legalist "persuasion" was a fatal relapse. In principle, and in its probable issue, this course was a reverting toward their old heathenism.

The Apostle again recalls them, as he does so often his children in Christ, to the time of their conversion. They had been, he reminds them, idolaters; ignorant of the true God, they were "enslaved to things that by nature are no gods." Two definitions Paul has given of idolatry: "There is no idol in the world;" and again, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice,

they sacrifice to demons, and not to God" (1 Cor. viii. 4; x. 20). Half lies, half devilry: such was the popular heathenism of the day. "Gods many and lords many" the Galatian Pagans worshipped—a strange Pantheon. There were their old, weird Celtic deities, before whom our British forefathers trembled. On this ancestral faith had been superimposed the frantic rites of the Phrygian Mother, Cybele, with her mutilated priests; and the more genial and humanistic cultus of the Greek Olympian gods. But they were gone, the whole "damnéd crew," as Milton calls them; for those whose eyes had seen the glory in the face of Jesus Christ, their spell was broken; heaven was swept clear and earth pure of their foul presence. The old gods are dead. No renaissance of humanism, no witchcraft of poetry can re-animate them. To us after these eighteen centuries, as to the Galatian believers, "there is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him." A man who knew the Old Testament, to say nothing of the teaching of Christ, could never sacrifice to Jupiter and Mercurius any more, nor shout "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." They were painted idols, *shams;* he had seen through them. They might frighten children in the dark; but the sun was up. Christianity destroyed Paganism as light kills darkness. Paul did not fear that his readers would slide back into actual heathenism. That was intellectually impossible. There are warnings in his Epistles against the spirit of idolatry, and against conformity with its customs; but none against return to its beliefs.

The old heathen life was indeed a *slavery,* full of fear

and degradation. The religious Pagan could never be sure that he had propitiated his gods sufficiently, or given to all their due. They were jealous and revengeful, envious of human prosperity, capable of infinite wrongdoing. In the worship of many of them acts were enjoined revolting to the conscience. And this is true of Polytheism all over the world. It is the most shameful bondage ever endured by the soul of man.

But Paul's readers had "come to know God." They had touched the great Reality. The phantoms had vanished; the Living One stood before them. His glory shone into their hearts "in the face of Jesus Christ." This, whenever it takes place, is for any man the crisis of his life—when he *comes to know God*, when *the God-consciousness* is born in him. Like the dawn of self-consciousness, it may be gradual. There are those, the happy few, who were "born again" so soon as they were born to thought and choice; they cannot remember a time when they did not love God, when they were not sensible of being "known of Him." But with others, as with Paul, the revelation is made at an instant, coming like a lightning-flash at midnight. But unlike the lightning it remained. Let the manifestation of God come how or when it may, it is decisive. The man into whose soul the Almighty has spoken His *I AM*, can never be the same afterwards. He may forget; he may deny it: but he has *known God;* he has seen the light of life. If he returns to darkness, his darkness is blacker and guiltier than before. On his brow there rests in all its sadness "Sorrow's crown of sorrow, remembering happier things."

Offences venial, excusable hitherto, from this time assume a graver hue. Things that in a lower stage of life were innocent, and even possessed religious value,

may now be unlawful, and the practice of them a declension, the first step in apostasy. What is delightful in a child, becomes folly in a grown man. The knowledge of God in Christ has raised us in the things of the spirit to man's estate, and it requires that we should "put away childish things," and amongst them ritual display and sacerdotal officiations, Pagan, Jewish, or Romish. These things form no part of the knowledge of God, or of the "true worship of the Father."

The Jewish "rudiments" were designed for men who had not known God as Christ declares Him, who had never seen the Saviour's cross. Jewish saints could not worship God in the Spirit of adoption. They remained under the spirit of servitude and fear. Their conceptions were so far "weak and poor" that they supposed the Divine favour to depend on such matters as the "washing of cups and pots," and the precise number of feet that one walked on the Sabbath. These ideas belonged to a childish stage of the religious life. Pharisaism had developed to the utmost this lower element of the Mosaic system, at the expense of everything that was spiritual in it. Men who had been brought up in Judaism might indeed, after conversion to Christ, retain their old customs as matters of social usage or pious habit, without regarding them as vital to religion. With Gentiles it was otherwise. Adopting Jewish rites *de novo*, they must do so on grounds of distinct religious necessity. For this very reason the duty of circumcision was pressed upon them. It was a means, they were told, essential to their spiritual perfection, to the attainment of full Christian privileges. But to know God by the witness of the Holy Spirit of Christ, as the Galatians had done, was an experience sufficient to show that this "persuasion" was false.

It did not "come of Him that called them." It introduced them to a path the opposite of that they had entered at their conversion, a way that led downwards and not upwards, from the spiritual to the sensuous, from the salvation of faith to that of self-wrought work of law.

"Known God," Paul says,—"or rather *were known of God*." He hastens to correct himself. He will not let an expression pass that seems to ascribe anything simply to human acquisition. "Ye have not chosen Me," said Jesus; "I have chosen you." So the Apostle John: "Not that we loved God, but that He loved us." This is true through the entire range of the Christian life. "We apprehend that for which we were apprehended by Christ Jesus." Our love, our knowledge—what are they but the sense of the Divine love and knowledge in us? Religion is a bestowment, not an achievement. It is "God working in us to will and work for the sake of His good pleasure." In this light the gospel presented itself at first to the Galatians. The preaching of the Apostle, the vision of the cross of Christ, made them sensible of God's living presence. They felt the gaze of an Infinite purity and compassion, of an All-wise, All-pitiful Father, fixed upon them. He was calling them, slaves of idolatry and sin, "into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ." The illuminating glance of God pierced to their inmost being. In that light God and the soul met, and knew each other.

And now, after this profound, transforming revelation, this sublime communion with God, will they turn back to a life of puerile formalities, of slavish dependence and fear? Is the strength of their devotion to be spent, its fragrance exhaled in the drudgery of legal service? Surely they know God better than to think

that He requires this. And He who knew them, as they have proved, and knows what was right and needful for them, has imposed no such burden. He granted them the rich gifts of His grace—the Divine sonship, the heavenly heirship—on terms of mere faith in Christ, and without legal stipulation of any kind. Is it not enough that God knows them, and counts them for His children!

So knowing, and so known, let them be content. Let them seek only to keep themselves in the love of God, and in the comfort of His Spirit. Raised to this high level, they must not decline to a lower. Their heathen "rudiments" were excusable before; but now even Jewish "rudiments" are things to be left behind.

II. It further appears that the Apostle saw *an element existing in Judaism common to it with the ethnic religions.* For he says that his readers, formerly "enslaved to idols," are "now *turning back* to the weak and beggarly rudiments, to which they would fain be in bondage *over again*."

"The rudiments" of ver. 9 cannot, without exegetical violence, be detached from "the rudiments of the world" of ver. 3. And these latter plainly signify the Judaic rites (see Chapter XVI.). The Judaistic practices of the Galatians were, Paul declares, *a backsliding toward their old idolatries.* We can only escape this construction of the passage at the cost of making the Apostle's remonstrance inconsequent and pointless. The argument of the letter hitherto has been directed with concentrated purpose against Judaic conformity. To suppose that just at this point, in making its application, he turns aside without notice or explanation to an entirely different matter, is to stultify his reasoning. The only ground for referring the "days and seasons"

of ver. 10 to any other than a Jewish origin, lies in the apprehension that such reference disparages the Christian Sabbath.

But how, we ask, was it possible for Paul to use language which identifies the revered law of God with rites of heathenism, which he accounted a "fellowship with demons"? Bishop Lightfoot has answered this question in words we cannot do better than quote: "The Apostle regards the higher element in heathen religion as corresponding, however imperfectly, to the lower in the Mosaic law. For we may consider both the one and the other as made up of two component parts, the *spiritual* and the *ritualistic*. Now viewed in their *spiritual* aspect, there is no comparison between the one and the other. In this respect the heathen religions, so far as they added anything of their own to that sense of dependence on God which is innate in man and which they could not entirely crush, were wholly bad. On the contrary, in the Mosaic law the spiritual element was most truly divine. But this does not enter into our reckoning here. For Christianity has appropriated all that was spiritual in its predecessor. . . . The *ritualistic* element alone remains to be considered, and here is the meeting-point of Judaism and Heathenism. In Judaism this was as much lower than its spiritual element, as in Heathenism it was higher. Hence the two systems approach within such a distance that they can, under certain limitations, be classed together. They have at least so much in common that a lapse into Judaism can be regarded as a relapse into the position of unconverted Heathenism. Judaism was a system of bondage like Heathenism. Heathenism had been a disciplinary training like Judaism" (Commentary *in loc.*).

This line of explanation may perhaps be carried a step further. Judaism was rudimentary throughout. A religion so largely ritualistic could not but be spiritually and morally defective. In its partial apprehension of the Divine attributes, its limitation of God's grace to a single people, its dim perception of immortality, there were great deficiencies in the Jewish creed. Its ethical code, moreover, was faulty; it contained "precepts given for the hardness of men's hearts"—touching, for example, the laws of marriage, and the right of revenge. There was not a little in Judaism, especially in its Pharisaic form, that belonged to a half-awakened conscience, to a rude and sensuous religious faculty. Christ came to "fulfil the law;" but in that fulfilment He did not shrink from correcting it. He emended the letter of its teaching, that its true spirit might be elicited. For an enlightened Christian who had learned of Jesus the "royal law, the law of liberty," to conform to Judaism was unmistakably to "turn back." Moreover, it was just the weakest and least spiritual part of the system of Moses that the legalist teachers inculcated on Gentile Christians; while their own lives fell short of its moral requirements (ch. vi. 12).

Mosaism had been in the days of its inspiration and creative vigour the great opponent of idolatry. It was the Lord's witness throughout long centuries of heathen darkness and oppression, and by its testimony has rendered splendid service to God and man. But from the standpoint of Christianity a certain degree of resemblance begins to be seen underlying this antagonism. The faith of the Israelitish people combatted idolatry with weapons too much like its own. A worldly and servile element remained in it. To one who has advanced in front, positions at an earlier stage of his progress lying

apart and paths widely divergent now assume the same general direction. To resort either to Jewish or heathen rites, meant *to turn back from Christ.* It was to adopt principles of religion obsolete and unfit for those who had known God through Him. What in its time and for its purpose was excellent, nay indispensable, in doctrine and in worship, in time also had "decayed and waxed old." To tie the living spirit of Christianity to dead forms is to tie it to corruption.

"Weak and beggarly rudiments"—it is a hard sentence; and yet what else were Jewish ceremonies and rules of diet, in comparison with "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost"? What was circumcision, now that there was no longer "Jew and Greek?" What was there in Saturday more than in any other day of the week, if it ceased to be a sign between the Lord of the Sabbath and His people? These things were, as Paul saw them, the cast-clothes of religion. For Gentile Christians the history of the Jewish ordinances had much instruction; but their observance was no whit more binding than that of heathen ceremonies. Even in the ancient times God valued them only as they were the expression of a devout, believing spirit. "Your new moons and your appointed feasts," He had said to an ungodly generation, "My soul hateth" (Isa. i. 14). And was He likely to accept them now, when they were enforced by ambition and party-spirit, at the expense of His Church's peace; when their observance turned men's thoughts away from faith in His Son, and in the power of His life-giving Spirit? There is nothing too severe, too scornful for Paul to say of these venerable rites of Israel, now that they stand in the way of a living faith and trammel the freedom of the sons of God.

He tosses them aside as the swaddling-bands of the Church's infancy—childish fetters, too weak to hold the limbs of grown men. "He brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for the children of Israel did burn incense to it; and he called it *Nehushtan—a piece of brass*" (2 Kings xviii. 4). Brave Hezekiah! Paul does the same with the whole ceremonial of Moses. "Beggarly rudiments," he says. What divine refreshment there is in a blast of wholesome scorn! It was their traditions, their ritual that the Judaists worshipped, not the Holy One of Israel. "They would compass sea and land to make one proselyte," and then "make him twofold more the child of hell than themselves." This was the only result that the success of the Judaistic agitation could have achieved.

In thus decrying Jewish ordinances, the Apostle by implication allows a certain value to the rites of Paganism. The Galatians were formerly in bondage to "them that are no gods." Now, he says, they are turning *again* to the like servitude by conforming to Mosaic legalism. They wish to come *again* under subjection to "the weak and poor rudiments." In Galatian heathenism Paul appears to recognise "rudiments" of truth and a certain preparation for Christianity. While Judaic rites amounted to no more than rudiments of a spiritual faith, there were influences at work in Paganism that come under the same category. Paul believed that "God had not left Himself without witness to any." He never treated heathen creeds with indiscriminate contempt, as though they were utterly corrupt and worthless. Witness his address to the "religious" Athenians, and to the wild people of Lycaonia (Acts xiv. 15—17; xvii. 22—31). He finds his text in "certain of your own (heathen)

poets." He appeals to the sense of a Divine presence "not far from any one of us;" and declares that though God was "unknown" to the nations, they were under His guidance and were "feeling after Him." To this extent Paul admits a *Preparatio evangelica* in the Gentile world; he would have been prepared, with Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and with modern students of comparative religion, to trace in the poets and wise men of Greece, in the lawgivers of Rome, in the mystics of the East, presentiments of Christianity, ideas and aspirations that pointed to it as their fulfilment. The human race was not left in total darkness beyond the range of the light shining on Zion's hill. The old Pagans, "suckled in a creed outworn," were not altogether God-forsaken. They too, amid darkness like the shadow of death, had "glimpses that might make them less forlorn." And so have the heathen still. We must not suppose either that revealed religion was perfect from the beginning; or that the natural religions were altogether without fragments and rudiments of saving truth.

"Days you are scrupulously keeping, and months, and seasons, and years,"—the weekly sabbath, the new moon, the annual festivals, the sacred seventh year, the round of the Jewish Kalendar. On these matters the Galatians had, as it seems, already fallen in with the directions of the Jewish teachers. The word by which the Apostle describes their practice, παρατηρεῖσθε, denotes, besides the fact, the manner and spirit of the observance—an *assiduous, anxious attention*, such as the spirit of legal exaction dictated. These prescriptions the Galatians would the more readily adopt, because in their heathen life they were accustomed to stated celebrations. The Pagan Kalendar

was crowded with days sacred to gods and divine heroes. This resemblance justified Paul all the more in taxing them with relapsing towards heathenism.

The Church of later centuries, both in its Eastern and Western branch, went far in the same direction. It made the keeping of holy days a prominent and obligatory part of Christianity; it has multiplied them superstitiously and beyond all reason. Amongst the rest it incorporated heathen festivals, too little changed by their consecration.

Paul's remonstrance condemns in principle the enforcement of sacred seasons as things essential to salvation, in the sense in which the Jewish Sabbath was the bond of the ancient Covenant. We may not place even the Lord's Day upon this footing. Far different from this is the unforced and grateful celebration of the First Day of the week, which sprang up in the Apostolic Church, and is assumed by the Apostles Paul and John (1 Cor. xvi. 2; Rev. i. 10). The rule of the seventh day's rest has so much intrinsic fitness, and has brought with it so many benefits, that after it had been enforced by strict law in the Jewish Church for so long, its maintenance could now be left, without express re-enactment, as a matter of freedom to the good sense and right feeling of Christian believers, "sons of the resurrection." Its legislative sanction rests on grounds of public propriety and national well-being, which need not to be asserted here. Wherever the "Lord of the Sabbath" rules, His Day will be gladly kept for His sake.

The Apostle in protecting Gentile liberties is no enemy to order in worship and outward life. No one can justly quote his authority in opposition to such appointments as a Christian community may make, for

reasons of expediency and decorum, in the regulation of its affairs. But he teaches that the essence of Christianity does not lie in things of this kind, not in questions of meat and drink, nor of time and place. To put these details, however important in their own order, on a level with righteousness, mercy, and faith, is to bring a snare upon the conscience; it is to introduce once more into the Church the leaven of justification by works of law.

"Weak and poor" the best forms of piety become, without inward knowledge of God. Liturgies, creeds and confessions, church music and architecture, Sundays, fasts, festivals, are beautiful things when they are the transcript of a living faith. When that is gone, their charm, their spiritual worth is gone. They no longer belong to *religion;* they have ceased to be a bond between the souls of men and God. "According to our faith"—our actual, not professional or "confessional" faith—"it shall be done unto us": such is the rule of Christ. To cling to formularies which have lost their meaning and to which the Spirit of truth gives no present witness, is a demoralising bondage.

But this is not the only, nor the commonest way in which the sons of God are tempted to return to bondage. "Whosoever *committeth sin,*" Christ said, "is the servant of sin." And the Apostle will have to warn his readers that by their abuse of liberty, by their readiness to make it "an occasion to the flesh," they were likely to forfeit it. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" (ch. v. 24). This warning must be balanced against the other. Our liberty from outward constraint should be still more a liberty from the dominion of self, from pride and desire and anger; or

it is not the liberty of God's children. Inward servitude is after all the vilest and worst.

"You make me afraid," at last the Apostle is compelled to say, "that I have laboured in vain." His enemies had caused him no such fear. While his children in the faith were true to him, he was afraid of nothing. "Now we live," he says in one of his Epistles, "if ye stand fast in the Lord!" But if they should fall away? He trembles for his own work, for these wayward children who had already caused him so many pangs. It is in a tone of the deepest solicitude that he continues his expostulation in the following paragraph.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PAUL'S ENTREATY.

"I beseech you, brethren, be as I *am*, for I *am* as ye *are*. Ye did me no wrong: but ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you the first time: and that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but ye received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus. Where then is that gratulation of yourselves? for I bear you witness, that, if possible, ye would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. So then am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They zealously seek you in no good way; nay, they desire to shut you out, that ye may seek them. But it is good to be zealously sought in a good matter at all times, and not only when I am present with you,—my children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you.* Yea, I could wish to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I am perplexed about you."—GAL. iv. 12—20.

THE reproof of the last paragraph ended in a sigh. To see Christ's freemen relapsing into bondage, and exchanging their Divine birthright for childish toys of ceremonial, what can be more saddening and disappointing than this? Their own experience of salvation, the Apostle's prayers and toils on their behalf, are, to all appearance, wasted on these foolish Galatians. One resource is still left him. He has refuted and anathematized the "other gospel." He has done what explanation and argument can do to set himself right with his readers, and to destroy the web of sophistry

* For the rendering of this clause, see the exposition which follows.

in which their minds had been entangled. He will now try to win them by a gentler persuasion. If reason and authority fail, "for love's sake he will rather beseech" them.

He had reminded them of their former idolatry; and this calls up to the Apostle's mind the circumstances of his first ministry in Galatia. He sees himself once more a stranger amongst this strange people, a traveller fallen sick and dependent on their hospitality, preaching a gospel with nothing to recommend it in the appearance of its advocate, and which the sickness delaying his journey had compelled him, contrary to his intention, to proclaim amongst them. Yet with what ready and generous hospitality they had received the infirm Apostle! Had he been an angel from heaven—nay, the Lord Jesus Himself, they could scarcely have shown him more attention than they did. His physical weakness, which would have moved the contempt of others, called forth their sympathies. However severely he may be compelled to censure them, however much their feelings toward him have changed, he will never forget the kindness he then received. Surely they cannot think him their enemy, or allow him to be supplanted by the unworthy rivals who are seeking their regard. So Paul pleads with his old friends, and seeks to win for his arguments a way to their hearts through the affection for himself which he fain hopes is still lingering there.

Hoc prudentis est pastoris, Calvin aptly says. But there is more in this entreaty than a calculated prudence. It is a cry of the heart. Paul's soul is in the pangs of travail (ver. 19). We have seen the sternness of his face relax while he pursues his mighty argument. As he surveys the working of God's

counsel in past ages, the promise given to Abraham for all nations, the intervening legal discipline, the coming of Christ in the fulness of time, the bursting of the ancient bonds, the sending forth of the Spirit of adoption—and all this for the sake of these Galatian Gentiles, and then thinks how they are after all declining from grace and renouncing their Divine inheritance, the Apostle's heart aches with grief. Foolish, fickle as they have proved, they are his children. He will "travail over them in birth a second time," if "Christ may yet be formed in them." Perhaps he has written too harshly. He half repents of his severity.* Fain would he "change his voice." If he could only "be with them," and see them face to face, haply his tears, his entreaties, would win them back. A rush of tender emotion wells up in Paul's soul. All his relentings are stirred. He is no longer the master in Christ rebuking unfaithful disciples; he is the mother weeping over her misguided sons.

There are considerable difficulties in the exegesis of this passage. We note them in succession as they arise:—(1) In ver. 12 we prefer, with Meyer and Lightfoot, to read, "Be as I, for I *became* (rather than *am*) as you—brethren, I beseech you." The verses preceding and following both suggest the past tense in the ellipsis. Paul's memory is busy. He appeals to the "auld lang syne." He reminds the Galatians of what he "had been amongst them for their sake,"† how he then behaved in regard to the matters in dispute. He assumed no airs of Jewish superiority. He

* Comp. 2 Cor. ii. 4; vii. 8.
† Comp. 1 Thess. i. 5; ii. 7, 8.

did not separate himself from his Gentile brethren by any practice in which they could not join. He "became as they," placing himself by their side on the ground of a common Christian faith. He asks for reciprocity, for "a recompense in like kind" (2 Cor. vi. 13). Are they going to set themselves above their Apostle, to take their stand on that very ground of Mosaic privilege which he had abandoned for their sake? He implores them not to do this thing. The beseechment, in the proper order of the words, comes in at the close of the sentence, with a pathetic emphasis. He makes himself a suppliant. "I beg you," he says, "by our old affection, by our brotherhood in Christ, not to desert me thus."

(2) Suddenly Paul turns to another point, according to his wont in this emotional mood: "There is nothing in which you have wronged me." Is he contradicting some allegation which had helped to estrange the Galatians? Had some one been saying that Pau was affronted by their conduct, and was actuated by personal resentment? In that case we should have looked for a specific explanation and rebutment of the charge. Rather he is anticipating the thought that would naturally arise in the minds of his readers at this point. "Paul is asking us," they would say, "to let bygones be bygones, to give up this Judaistic attachment for his sake, and to meet him frankly on the old footing. But supposing we try to do so, he is very angry with us, as this letter shows; *he thinks we have treated him badly;* he will always have a grudge against us. Things can never be again as they were between ourselves and him."

Such feelings often arise upon the breach of an old friendship, to prevent the offending party from accept-

ing the proffered hand of reconciliation. Paul's protest removes this hindrance. He replies, "I have no sense of injury, no personal grievance against you. It is impossible I should cherish ill-will towards *you*. You know how handsomely you treated me when I first came amongst you. Nothing can efface from my heart the recollection of that time. You must not think that I hate you, because I tell you the truth" (ver. 16).

(3) "Because of an infirmity of the flesh" (physical weakness), is the truer rendering of ver. 13; and "your temptation in my flesh" the genuine reading of ver. 14, restored by the Revisers. Sickness had arrested the Apostle's course during his second missionary tour, and detained him in the Galatic country. So that he had not only "been with" the Galatians "in weakness," as afterwards when during the same journey he preached at Corinth (1 Cor. ii. 3); but actually "*because of* weakness." His infirmities gave him occasion to minister there, when he had intended to pass them by.

Paul had no thought of evangelizing Galatia; another goal was in view. It was patent to them—indeed he confessed as much at the time—that if he had been able to proceed, he would not have lingered in their country. This was certainly an unpromising introduction. And the Apostle's state of health made it at that time a trial for any one to listen to him. There was something in the nature of his malady to excite contempt, even loathing for his person. "That which tried you in my flesh, ye did not *despise*, nor *spit out:*" such is Paul's vivid phrase. How few men would have humility enough to refer to a circumstance of this kind; or could do so without loss of dignity. He felt that the condition of the messenger might well

have moved this Galatian people to derision, rather than to reverence for his message.

At the best Paul's appearance and address were none of the most prepossessing.* The "ugly little Jew" M. Renan calls him, repeating the taunts of his Corinthian contemners. His sickness in Galatia, connected, it would appear, with some constitutional weakness, from which he suffered greatly during his second and third missionary tours, assumed a humiliating as well as a painful form. Yet this "thorn in the flesh," a bitter trial assuredly to himself, † had proved at once a trial and a blessing to his unintended hearers in Galatia.

(4) So far from taking offence at Paul's unfortunate condition, they welcomed him with enthusiasm. They "blessed themselves" that he had come (ver. 15). They said one to another, "How fortunate we are in having this good man amongst us! What a happy thing for us that Paul's sickness obliged him to stay and give us the opportunity of hearing his good news!" Such was their former "gratulation." The regard they conceived for the sick Apostle was unbounded. "For I bear you witness," he says, "that, if possible, you would have *dug out your eyes* and given them me!"

Is this no more than a strong hyperbole, describing the almost extravagant devotion which the Galatians expressed to the Apostle? Or are we to read the terms more literally? So it has been sometimes supposed. In this expression some critics have discovered a clue to the nature of Paul's malady. The Galatians, as they read the sentence, wished they could have taken out their own eyes and given them to Paul, *in*

* 1 Cor. ii. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 7; x. 1, 10; xi. 6.

† Comp 2 Cor. xii. 7—10, referring apparently to the first outbreak of this mysterious affliction.

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place of his disabled ones. This hypothesis, it is argued, agrees with other circumstances of the case and gives shape to a number of scattered intimations touching the same subject. Infirmity of the eyes would explain the "large characters" of Paul's handwriting (ch. vi. 11), and his habit of using an amanuensis. It would account for his ignorance of the person of the High Priest at his trial in Jerusalem (Acts xxiii. 2—5). The blindness that struck him on the way to Damascus may have laid the foundation of a chronic affection of this kind, afterwards developed and aggravated by the hardships of his missionary life. And such an affliction would correspond to what is said respecting the "thorn" of 2 Cor. xii. 7, and the "temptation" of this passage. For it would be excessively painful, and at the same time disabling and disfiguring in its effects.

This conjecture has much to recommend it. But it finds a very precarious support in the text. Paul does not say, "You would have plucked out *your own* (A.V.) eyes and given them *me*," as though he were thinking of an exchange of eyes; but, "You would have plucked out your *eyes* and given them me"—as much as to say, "You would have done anything in the world for me then,—even taken out your eyes and given them to me."* In the phrase "dug out" we may detect a touch of irony. This was the genuine Galatian style. The Celtic temperament loves to launch itself out in vehemencies and flourishes of this sort. These ardent Gauls had been perfectly enraptured with Paul. They lavished upon him their most exuberant metaphors. They said these things in all sincerity; he "bears them record" to this. However cool they

* Comp. Matt. xviii. 9.

have become since, they were gushing enough and to spare in their affection towards him then. And now have they "so quickly" turned against him? Because he crosses their new fancies and tells them unwelcome truths, they rush to the opposite extreme and even think him their enemy!

(5) Suddenly the Apostle turns upon his opposers (ver. 17). The Judaizers had disturbed his happy relations with his Galatian flock; they had made them half believe that he was their enemy. The Galatians must choose between Paul and his traducers. Let them scrutinise the motives of these new teachers. Let them call to mind the claims of their father in Christ. "They are courting you," he says,—"these present suitors for your regard—dishonourably; they want to shut you out and have you to themselves, that you may pay court to them." They pretend to be zealous for your interests; but it is their own they seek (ch. vi. 12).

So far the Apostle's meaning is tolerably clear. But ver. 18 is obscure. It may be construed in either of two ways, as *Paul* or *the Galatians* are taken for the subject glanced at in the verb *to be courted* in its first clause: "But it is honourable to be courted always in an honourable way, and not only when I am present with you." Does Paul mean that he has no objection to the Galatians making other friends in his absence? or, that he thinks they ought not to forget him in his absence? The latter, as we think. The Apostle complains of their inconstancy towards himself. This is a text for friends and lovers. Where attachment is honourable, it should be lasting. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart," says the Bride of the Song of Songs. With the Galatians it seemed to be, "Out of sight, out of mind." They allowed Paul to be pushed out by

scheming rivals. He was far away; they were on the spot. He told them the truth; the Judaizers flattered them. So their foolish heads were turned. They were positively "bewitched" by these new admirers; and preferred their sinister and designing compliments to Paul's sterling honour and proved fidelity.

The connection of vv. 17, 18 turns on the words *honourable* and *court*,* each of which is thrice repeated. There is a kind of play on the verb ζηλόω. In ver. 18 it implies a true, in ver. 17 a counterfeit affection (an affectation). Paul might have said, "It is good one should be *loved, followed with affection, always*," but for the sake of the verbal antithesis. In ver. 17 he taxes his opponents with unworthily courting the favour of the Galatians; in ver. 18 he intimates his grief that he himself in his absence is no longer courted by them.

(6) In the next verse this grief of wounded affection, checked at first by a certain reserve, breaks out uncontrollably: "My children, for whom again I am in travail, till Christ be formed in you!"† This outcry is a pathetic continuance of his expostulation. He cannot bear the thought of losing these children of his heart. He stretches out his arms to them. Tears stream from his eyes. He has been speaking in measured, almost playful terms, in comparing himself with his supplanters. But the possibility of their success, the thought of the mischief going on in Galatia and of the little power he has to prevent it, wrings his very soul. He feels a mother's pangs for his imperilled children, as he writes these distressful words.

* Ζηλόω, *to have zeal* towards a person or thing, *to affect* (A.V.: in its older English sense of *seeking, paying regard to any one*).

† The *full stop* placed in the English Version at the end of ver. 18, on this view, is out of place.

There is nothing gained by substituting "little children" (John's phrase) for "children," everywhere else used by Paul, and attested here by the best witnesses. The sentiment is that of 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8; 1 Cor. iv. 14—16. The Apostle is not thinking of the littleness or feebleness of the Galatians, but simply of their relation to himself. His sorrow is the sorrow of bereavement. "You have not many *mothers*," he seems to say: "I have travailed over you in birth; and now a second time you bring on me a mother's pains, which I must endure until Christ is formed in you and His image is renewed in your souls."

Paul stands before us as an injured friend, a faithful minister of Christ robbed of his people's love. He is wounded in his tenderest affections. For the sake of the Gentile Churches he had given up everything in life that he prized (ver. 12; 1 Cor. ix. 21); he had exposed himself to the contempt and hatred of his fellow-countrymen—and this is his reward, "to be loved the less, the more abundantly he loves!" (2 Cor. xii. 15).

But if he is grieved at this defection, he is equally perplexed. He cannot tell what to make of the Galatians, or in what tone to address them. He has warned, denounced, argued, protested, pleaded as a mother with her children; still he doubts whether he will prevail. If he could only see them and meet them as in former days, laying aside the distance, the sternness of authority which he has been forced to assume, he might yet reach their hearts. At least he would know how matters really stand, and in what language he ought to speak So his entreaty ends: "I wish I could only be present with you now, and speak in some different voice. For I am at a loss to know how to deal with you."

This picture of estrangement and reproach tells its own tale, when its lines have once been clearly marked. We may dwell, however, a little longer on some of the lessons which it teaches :—

I. In the first place, it is evident that *strong emotions and warm affections are no guarantee for the permanence of religious life.*

The Galatians resembled the "stony ground" hearers of our Lord's parable,—"such as hear the word, and immediately with joy receive it; but they have no root in themselves; they believe for a time." It was not "persecution" indeed that "offended" them; but flattery proved equally effectual. They were of the same fervid temper as Peter on the night of the Passion, when he said, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee in anywise,"—within a few hours thrice denying his Master, with "oaths and curses." They lacked seriousness and depth. They had fine susceptibilities and a large fund of enthusiasm; they were full of eloquent protestations; and under excitement were capable of great efforts and sacrifices. But there was a flaw in their nature. They were creatures of impulse—soon hot, soon cold. One cannot help liking such people—but as for *trusting* them, that is a different matter.

Nothing could be more delightful or promising than the appearance these Churches presented in the early days of their conversion. They heard the Apostle's message with rapt attention; they felt its Divine power, so strangely contrasting with his physical feebleness. They were amazingly wrought upon. The new life in Christ kindled all the fervour of their passionate nature. How they triumphed in Christ! How they blessed the day when the gospel visited their

land! They almost worshipped the Apostle. They could not do enough for him. Their hearts bled for his sufferings. Where are all these transports now? Paul is far away. Other teachers have come, with "another gospel." And the cross is already forgotten! They are contemplating circumcision; they are busy studying the Jewish ritual, making arrangements for feast-days and "functions", eagerly discussing points of ceremony. Their minds are poisoned with mistrust of their own Apostle, whose heart is ready to break over their folly and frivolity. All this for the want of a little reflection, for want of the steadiness of purpose without which the most genial disposition and the most ardent emotions inevitably run to waste. Their faith had been too much a matter of feeling, too little of principle.

II. Further, we observe *how prone are those who have put themselves in the wrong to fix the blame on others.*

The Apostle was compelled in fidelity to truth to say hard things to his Galatian disciples. He had previously, on his last visit, given them a solemn warning on account of their Judaic proclivities (ch. i. 9). In this Epistle he censures them roundly. He wonders at them; he calls them "senseless Galatians"; he tells them they are within a step of being cut off from Christ (ch. v. 4). And now they cry out, "Paul is our enemy. If he cared for us, how could he write so cruelly! We were excessively fond of him once, we could not do too much for him; but that is all over now. If we had inflicted on him some great injury, he could scarcely treat us more roughly." Thoughtless and excitable people commonly reason in this way. Personalities with them take the place of argument and principle. The severity of a holy zeal for truth is

a thing they can never understand. If you disagree with them and oppose them, they put it down to some petty animosity. They credit you with a private grudge against them; and straightway enroll you in the number of their enemies, though you may be in reality their best friend. Flatter them, humour their vanity, and you have them at your bidding. Such men it is the hardest thing in the world honestly to serve. They will always prefer "the kisses of an enemy" to the faithful "wounds of a friend."

III. Men of the Galatian type are *the natural prey of self-seeking agitators.* However sound the principles in which they were trained, however true the friendships they have enjoyed, they must have change. The accustomed palls upon them. Giddy Athenians, they love nothing so much as "to hear and tell some new thing." They ostracize Aristides, simply because they are "tired of hearing him always called the Just." To hear "the same things," however "safe" it may be, even from an Apostle's lips is to them intolerably "grievous." They never think earnestly and patiently enough to find the deeper springs, the fresh delight and satisfaction lying hidden in the great unchanging truths. These are they who are "carried about with divers and strange doctrines," who run after the newest thing in ritualistic art, or sensational evangelism, or well-spiced heterodoxy. Truth and plain dealing, apostolic holiness and godly sincerity, are outmatched in dealing with them by the craft of worldly wisdom. A little judicious flattery, something to please the eye and catch the fancy—and they are persuaded to believe almost anything, or to deny what they have most earnestly believed.

What had the Legalists to offer compared with the

gifts bestowed on these Churches through Paul? What was there that could make them rivals to him in character or spiritual power? And yet the Galatians flock round the Judaist teachers, and accept without inquiry their slanders and perversions of the gospel; while the Apostle, their true friend and father, too true to spare their faults, stands suspected, almost deserted. He must forsooth implore them to come down from the heights of their would-be legal superiority, and to meet him on the common ground of grace and saving faith. The sheep will not hear their shepherd's voice; they follow strangers, though they be thieves and hirelings. "O foolish Galatians!"

Whether the Apostle's entreaty prevailed to recall them or did not, we cannot tell. From the silence with which these Churches are passed over in the Acts of the Apostles, and the little that is heard of them afterwards, an unfavourable inference appears probable. The Judaistic leaven, it is to be feared, went far to leaven the whole lump. Paul's apprehensions were only too well-grounded. And these hopeful converts who had once "run well," were fatally "hindered" and fell far behind in the Christian race. Such, in all likelihood, was the result of the departure from the truth of the gospel into which the Galatians allowed themselves to be drawn.

Whatever was the sequel to this story, Paul's protest remains to witness to the sincerity and tenderness of the great Apostle's soul, and to the disastrous issues of the levity of character which distinguished his Galatian disciples.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE STORY OF HAGAR.

"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the freewoman. Howbeit the *son* by the handmaid is born after the flesh; but the *son* by the freewoman *is born* through promise. Which things contain an allegory: for these *women* are two covenants; one from mount Sinai, bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar. For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is: for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother. For it is written,

> Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not;
> Break forth and cry, thou that travailest not:
> For more are the children of the desolate than of her which hath the husband.

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so it is now. Howbeit what saith the scripture? Cast out the handmaid and her son; for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman. Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the freewoman. For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."—GAL. iv. 21—v. 1.

THE Apostle wished that he could "change his voice" (ver. 20). Indeed he has changed it more than once. "Any one who looks closely may see that there is much change and alteration of feeling in what the Apostle has previously written" (Theodorus).

Now he will try another tone; he proceeds in fact to address his readers in a style which we find nowhere else in his Epistles. He will tell his "children" a story! Perhaps he may thus succeed better than by graver argument. Their quick fancy will readily apprehend the bearing of the illustration; it may bring home to them the force of his doctrinal contention, and the peril of their own position, as he fears they have not seen them yet. And so, after the pathetic appeal of the last paragraph, and before he delivers his decisive, official protest to the Galatians against their circumcision, he interjects this "allegory" of the two sons of Abraham.

Paul cites the history of *the sons of Abraham*. No other example would have served his purpose. The controversy between himself and the Judaizers turned on the question, Who are the true heirs of Abraham? (ch. iii. 7, 16, 29). He made faith in Christ, they circumcision and law-keeping, the ground of sonship. So the inheritance was claimed in a double sense. But now, if it should appear that this antithesis existed in principle in the bosom of the patriarchal family, if we should find that there was an elder son of Abraham's flesh opposed to the child of promise, how powerfully will this analogy sustain the Apostle's position. Judaism will then be seen to be playing over again the part of Ishmael; and "the Jerusalem that now is" takes the place of Hagar, the slave-mother. The moral situation created by the Judaic controversy had been rehearsed in the family life of Abraham.

"Tell me," the Apostle asks, "you that would fain be subject to the law, do you not know what it relates concerning Abraham? He had two sons, one of free, and the other of servile birth. Do you wish to belong

to the line of Ishmael, or Isaac?" In this way Paul resumes the thread of his discourse dropped in ver. 7. Faith, he had told his readers, had made them sons of God. They were, in Christ, of Abraham's spiritual seed, heirs of his promise. God had sent His Son to redeem them, and the Spirit of His Son to attest their adoption. But they were not content. They were ambitious of Jewish privileges. The Legalists persuaded them that they must be circumcised and conform to Moses, in order to be Abraham's children in full title. "Very well," the Apostle says, "you may become Abraham's sons in this fashion. Only you must observe that Abraham had *two* sons. And the Law will make you his sons by Hagar, whose home is Sinai —not Israelites, but *Ishmaelites!*"

Paul's Galatian allegory has greatly exercised the minds of his critics. The word is one of ill repute in exegesis. *Allegory* was the instrument of Rabbinical and Alexandrine Scripturists, an infallible device for extracting the predetermined sense from the letter of the sacred text. The "spiritualising" of Christian interpreters has been carried, in many instances, to equal excess of riot. For the honest meaning of the word of God anything and everything has been substituted that lawless fancy and verbal ingenuity could read into it. The most arbitrary and grotesque distortions of the facts of Scripture have passed current under cover of the clause, "which things are an allegory." But Paul's allegory, and that of Philo and the Allegorical school, are very different things, as widely removed as the "words of truth and soberness" from the intoxications of a mystical idealism.

With Paul the spiritual sense of Scripture is based on the historical, is in fact the moral content and import

thereof; for he sees in history a continuous manifestation of God's will. With the Allegorists the spiritual sense, arrived at by *à priori* means, replaces the historical, destroyed to make room for it. The Apostle points out in the story of Hagar a spiritual intent, such as exists in every scene of human life if we had eyes to see it, something other than the literal relation of the facts, but nowise alien from it. Here lies the difference between legitimate and illegitimate allegory. The utmost freedom may be given to this employment of the imagination, so long as it is true to the *moral* of the narrative which it applies. In principle the Pauline allegory does not differ from the type. In the type the correspondence of the sign and thing signified centres in a single figure or event; in such an allegory as this it is extended to a group of figures and a series of events. But the force of the application depends on the actuality of the original story, which in the illicit allegory is matter of indifference.

"Which things are allegorized"—so the Apostle literally writes in ver. 24—*made matters of allegory*. The phrase intimates, as Bishop Lightfoot suggests, that the Hagarene episode in Genesis (ch. xvi., xxi. 1—21) was commonly interpreted in a figurative way. The Galatians had heard from their Jewish teachers specimens of this popular mode of exposition. Paul will employ it too; and will give his own reading of the famous story of Ishmael and Isaac. Philo of Alexandria, the greatest allegorist of the day, has expounded the same history. These eminent interpreters both make Sarah the mother of the spiritual, Hagar of the worldly offspring; both point out how the barren is exalted over the fruitful wife. So far, we may imagine, Paul is moving on the accepted lines of Jewish exegesis.

But Philo knows nothing of the correspondence between Isaac and *Christ*, which lies at the back of the Apostle's allegory. And there is this vital difference of method between the two divines, that whereas Paul's comparison is the illustration of a doctrine proved on other grounds—the painting which decorates the house already built (Luther)—with the Alexandrine idealist it forms the substance and staple of his teaching.

Under this allegorical dress the Apostle expounds once more his doctrine, already inculcated, of the difference between the Legal and Christian state. The former constitutes, as he now puts the matter, a bastard sonship like that of Ishmael, conferring only an external and provisional tenure in the Abrahamic inheritance. It is contrasted with the spiritual sonship of the true Israel in the following respects:—It is a state of *nature* as opposed to grace; of *bondage* as opposed to freedom; and further, it is *temporary* and soon to be ended by the Divine decree.

I. "He who is of the maid-servant is *after the flesh;* but he that is of the free-woman is through promise. . . . Just as then he that was *after the flesh* persecuted him that was after the Spirit, so now" (vv. 23, 29). The Apostle sees in the different parentage of Abraham's sons the ground of a radical divergence of character. One was the child of nature, the other was the son of a spiritual faith.

Ishmael was in truth the fruit of unbelief; his birth was due to a natural but impatient misreading of the promise. The patriarch's union with Hagar was ill-assorted and ill-advised. It brought its natural penalty by introducing an alien element into his family life. The low-bred insolence which the serving-woman, in the prospect of becoming a mother, showed toward

the mistress to whom she owed her preferment, gave a foretaste of the unhappy consequences. The promise of posterity made to Abraham with a childless wife, was expressly designed to try his faith; and he had allowed it to be overborne by the reasonings of nature. It was no wonder that the son of the Egyptian slave, born under such conditions, proved to be of a lower type, and had to be finally excluded from the house.

In Ishmael's relation to his father there was nothing but the ordinary play of human motives. "The son of the handmaid was born after the flesh." He was a *natural* son. But Ishmael was not on that account cut off from the Divine mercies. Nor did his father's prayer, "O that Ishmael might live before Thee" (Gen. xvii. 18), remain unanswered. A great career was reserved by Divine Providence for his race. The Arabs, the fiery sons of the desert, through him claim descent from Abraham. They have carved their name deeply upon the history and the faith of the world. But sensuousness and lawlessness are everywhere the stamp of the Ishmaelite. With high gifts and some generous qualities, such as attracted to his eldest boy the love of Abraham, their fierce animal passion has been the curse of the sons of Hagar. Mohammedanism is a bastard Judaism; it is the religion of Abraham sensualised. Ishmael stands forth as the type of the carnal man. On outward grounds of flesh and blood he seeks inheritance in the kingdom of God; and with fleshly weapons passionately fights its battles.

To a similar position Judaism, in the Apostle's view, had now reduced itself. And to this footing the Galatian Churches would be brought if they yielded to the Judaistic solicitations. To be circumcised would be for

them to be born again after the flesh, to link themselves to Abraham in the unspiritual fashion of Hagar's son. Ishmael was the first to be circumcised (Gen. xvii. 23—26). It was to renounce salvation by faith and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. This course could only have one result. The Judaic ritualism they were adopting would bear fruit after its kind, in a worldly, sensuous life. Like Ishmael they would claim kinship with the Church of God on fleshly grounds; and their claim must prove as futile as did his.

The persecution of the Church by Judaism gave proof of the Ishmaelite spirit, the carnal animus by which it was possessed. A religion of externalism naturally becomes repressive. It knows not "the demonstration of the Spirit"; it has "confidence in the flesh." It relies on outward means for the propagation of its faith; and naturally resorts to the secular arm. The Inquisition and the Auto-da-fé are a not unfitting accompaniment of the gorgeous ceremonial of the Mass. Ritualism and priestly autocracy go hand in hand. "So now," says Paul, pointing to Ishmael's "persecution" of the infant Isaac, hinted at in Gen. xxi. 8—10.

The laughter of Hagar's boy at Sarah's weaning-feast seems but a slight offence to be visited with the punishment of expulsion; and the incident one beneath the dignity of theological argument. But the principle for which Paul contends is there; and it is the more easily apprehended when exhibited on this homely scale. The family is the germ and the mirror of society. In it are first called into play the motives which determine the course of history, the rise and fall of empires or churches. The gravamen of the charge

against Ishmael lies in the last word of Gen. xxi. 9, rendered in the Authorized Version *mocking*, and by the Revisers *playing*, after the Septuagint and the Vulgate. This word in the Hebrew is evidently a play on the name *Isaac, i.e., laughter*, given by Sarah to her boy with genial motherly delight (vv. 6, 7). Ishmael, now a youth of fourteen, takes up the child's name and turns it, on this public and festive occasion, into ridicule. Such an act was not only an insult to the mistress of the house and the young heir at a most untimely moment, it betrayed a jealousy and contempt on the part of Hagar's son towards his half-brother which gravely compromised Isaac's future. "The wild, ungovernable and pugnacious character ascribed to his descendants began to display itself in Ishmael, and to appear in language of provoking insolence; offended at the comparative indifference with which he was treated, he indulged in mockery, especially against Isaac, whose very name furnished him with satirical sneers." * Ishmael's jest cost him dear. The indignation of Sarah was reasonable; and Abraham was compelled to recognise in her demand the voice of God (vv. 10—12). The two boys, like Esau and Jacob in the next generation, represented opposite principles and ways of life, whose counter-working was to run through the course of future history. Their incompatibility was already manifest.

The Apostle's comparison must have been mortifying in the extreme to the Judaists. They are told in plain terms that they are in the position of outcast Ishmael; while uncircumcised Gentiles, without a drop of Abra-

* Kalisch, *Commentary*, on Genesis xxi. 9.

ham's blood in their veins, have received the promise forfeited by their unbelief. Paul could not have put his conclusion in a form more unwelcome to Jewish pride. But without this radical exposure of the legalist position it was impossible for him adequately to vindicate his gospel and defend his Gentile children in the faith.

II. From this contrast of birth "according to flesh" and "through promise" is deduced the opposition between *the slave-born and free-born sons.* "For these (the slave-mother and the free-woman) are two covenants, one indeed bearing children unto bondage—which is Hagar" (ver. 24). The other side of the antithesis is not formally expressed; it is obvious. Sarah the princess, Abraham's true wife, has her counterpart in the original covenant of promise renewed in Christ, and in "the Jerusalem above, which is our mother" (ver. 26). Sarah is the typical mother,* as Abraham is the father of the children of faith. In the *systoichia*, or tabular comparison, which the Apostle draws up after the manner of the schools, *Hagar* and *the Mosaic covenant*, *Sinai* and *the Jerusalem that now is* stand in one file and "answer to" each other; *Sarah* and *the Abrahamic covenant*, *Zion* and *the heavenly Jerusalem* succeed in the same order, opposite to them. "Zion" is wanting in the second file; but "Sinai and Zion" form a standing antithesis (Heb. xii. 18—22); the second is implied in the first. It was to *Zion* that the words of Isaiah cited in ver. 27, were addressed.

The first clause of ver. 25 is best understood in the shorter, marginal reading of the R. V., also preferred by Bishop Lightfoot (τὸ γὰρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστίν κ.τ.λ.). It

* Comp. Heb. xi. 11, 12; 1 Pet. iii. 6.

is a parenthesis—"for mount Sinai * is in Arabia"—*covenant* running on in the mind from ver. 24 as the continued subject of ver. 25 *b*: "and it answereth to the present Jerusalem." This is the simplest and most consistent construction of the passage. The interjected geographical reference serves to support the identification of the Sinaitic covenant with Hagar, *Arabia* being the well-known abode of the Hagarenes. Paul had met them in his wanderings there. Some scholars have attempted to establish a verbal agreement between the name of the slave-mother and that locally given to the Sinaitic range; but this explanation is precarious, and after all unnecessary. There was a real correspondence between place and people on the one hand, as between place and covenant on the other. Sinai formed a visible and imposing link between the race of Ishmael and the Mosaic law-giving. That awful, desolate mountain, whose aspect, as we can imagine, had vividly impressed itself on Paul's memory (ch. i. 17), spoke to him of bondage and terror. It was a true symbol of the working of the law of Moses, exhibited in the present condition of Judaism. And round the base of Sinai Hagar's wild sons had found their dwelling.

Jerusalem was no longer the mother of freemen. The boast, "we are Abraham's sons; we were never in bondage" (John viii. 33), was an unconscious irony. Her sons chafed under the Roman yoke. They were loaded with self-inflicted legal burdens. Above all, they were, notwithstanding their professed law-keeping, enslaved to sin, in servitude to their pride and evil

* Paul writes "the *Sinai* mountain" (τὸ Σινᾶ ὄρος) in tacit opposition to the other, familiar *Mount Zion* (Hofmann *in loc.*). In Heb. xii. 22 the same inversion appears, with the same significance.

lusts. The spirit of the nation was that of rebellious, discontented slaves. They were Ishmaelite sons of Abraham, with none of the nobleness, the reverence, the calm and elevated faith of their father. In the Judaism of the Apostle's day the Sinaitic dispensation, uncontrolled by the higher patriarchal and prophetic faith, had worked out its natural result. It "gendered to bondage." A system of repression and routine, it had produced men punctual in tithes of mint and anise, but without justice, mercy, or faith; vaunting their liberty while they were "servants of corruption." The law of Moses could not form a "new creature." It left the Ishmael of nature unchanged at heart, a child of the flesh, with whatever robes of outward decorum his nakedness was covered. The Pharisee was the typical product of law apart from grace. Under the garb of a freeman he carried the soul of a slave.

But ver. 26 sounds the note of deliverance: "The Jerusalem above is free; and she is our mother!" Paul has escaped from the prison of Legalism, from the confines of Sinai; he has left behind the perishing earthly Jerusalem, and with it the bitterness and gloom of his Pharisaic days. He is a citizen of the heavenly Zion, breathing the air of a Divine freedom. The yoke is broken from the neck of the Church of God; the desolation is gone from her heart. There come to the Apostle's lips the words of the great prophet of the Exile, depicting the deliverance of the spiritual Zion, despised and counted barren, but now to be the mother of a numberless offspring. In Isaiah's song, "Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not" (ch. liv.), the laughter of the childless Sarah bursts forth again, to be gloriously renewed in the persecuted Church of Jesus. Robbed

of all outward means, mocked and thrust out as she is by Israel after the flesh, her rejection is a release, an emancipation. Conscious of the Spirit of sonship and freedom, looking out on the boundless conquests lying before her in the Gentile world, the Church of the New Covenant glories in her tribulations. In Paul is fulfilled the joy of prophet and psalmist, who sang in former days of gloom concerning Israel's enlargement and world-wide victories. No legalist could understand words like these. "The veil" was upon his heart "in the reading of the Old Testament." But with "the Spirit of the Lord" comes "liberty." The prophetic inspiration has returned. The voice of rejoicing is heard again in the dwellings of Israel. "If the Son make you free," said Jesus, "ye shall be free indeed." This Epistle proves it.

III. "And the bondman *abideth not in the house for ever;* the Son abideth for ever" (John viii. 35). This also the Lord had testified: the Apostle repeats His warning in the terms of this allegory.

Sooner or later the slave-boy was bound to go. He has no proper birthright, no permanent footing in the house. One day he exceeds his licence, he makes himself intolerable; he must begone. "What saith the Scripture? Cast out the maidservant and her son; for the son of the maidservant shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman" (ver. 30). Paul has pronounced the doom of Judaism. His words echo those of Christ: "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. xxiii. 38); they are taken up again in the language of Heb. xiii. 13, 14, uttered on the eve of the fall of Jerusalem: "Let us go forth unto Jesus without the camp, bearing His reproach. We have here no continuing city, but we seek that which is to

come." On the walls of Jerusalem *ichabod* was plainly written. Since it "crucified our Lord" it was no longer the Holy City; it was "spiritually Sodom and Egypt" (Rev. xi. 8),—*Egypt*, the country of Hagar. Condemning Him, the Jewish nation passed sentence on itself. They were slaves who in blind rage slew their Master when He came to free them.

The Israelitish people showed more than Ishmael's jealousy towards the infant Church of the Spirit. No weapon of violence or calumny was too base to be used against it. The cup of their iniquity was filling fast. They were ripening for the judgement which Christ predicted (1 Thess. ii. 16). Year by year they became more hardened against spiritual truth, more malignant towards Christianity, and more furious and fanatical in their hatred towards their civil rulers. The cause of Judaism was hopelessly lost. In Rom. ix.—xi., written shortly after this Epistle, Paul assumes this as a settled thing, which he has to account for and to reconcile with Scripture. In the demand of Sarah for the expulsion of her rival, complied with by Abraham against his will, the Apostle reads the secret judgement of the Almighty on the proud city which he himself so ardently loved, but which had crucified his Lord and repented not. "Cut it down," Jesus cried; "why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke xiii. 7). The voice of Scripture speaks again: "Cast her out; she and her sons are slaves. They have no place amongst the sons of God." Ishmael was in the way of Isaac's safety and prosperity. And the Judaic ascendency was no less a danger to the Church. The blow which shattered Judaism, at once cleared the ground for the outward progress of the gospel and arrested the legalistic reaction which hindered its internal develop-

ment. The two systems were irreconcilable. It was Paul's merit to have first apprehended this contradiction in its full import. The time had come to apply in all its rigour Christ's principle of combat, "He that is not with Me, is against Me." It is the same rule of exclusion which Paul announces: "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). Out of Christ is no salvation. When the day of judgement comes, whether for men or nations, this is the touchstone: Have we, or have we not "the Spirit of God's Son?" Is our character that of sons of God, or slaves of sin? On the latter falls inevitably the sentence of expulsion, "He will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity" (Matt. xiii. 41).

This passage signalises the definite breach of Christianity with Judaism. The elder Apostles lingered in the porch of the Temple; the primitive Church clung to the ancient worship. Paul does not blame them for doing so. In their case this was but the survival of a past order, in principle acknowledged to be obsolete. But the Church of the future, the spiritual seed of Abraham gathered out of all nations, had no part in Legalism. The Apostle bends all his efforts to convince his readers of this, to make them sensible of the impassable gulf lying between them and outworn Mosaism. Again he repeats, "We are not children of a maidservant, but of her that is free" (ver. 31). The Church of Christ can no more hold fellowship with Judaism than could Isaac with the spiteful, mocking Ishmael. Paul leads the Church across the Rubicon. There is no turning back.

Ver. 1 of ch. v. is the application of the allegory. It is a triumphant assertion of liberty, a ringing summons to its defence. Its separation from ch. iv. is ill-judged,

and runs counter to the ancient divisions of the Epistle. "Christ set us free," Paul declares; "and it was *for freedom**—not that we might fall under a new servitude. *Stand fast* therefore; do not let yourselves be made bondmen over again." Bondmen the Galatians had been before (ch. iv. 8), bowing down to false and vile gods. Bondmen they will be again, if they are beguiled by the Legalists to accept the yoke of circumcision, if they take "the Jerusalem that now is" for their mother. They have tasted the joys of freedom; they know what it is to be sons of God, heirs of His kingdom and partakers of His Spirit; why do they stoop from their high estate? Why should Christ's freemen put a yoke upon their own neck? Let them only know their happiness and security in Christ, and refuse to be cheated out of the substance of their spiritual blessings by the illusive shadows which the Judaists offer them. Freedom once gained is a prize never to be lost. No care, no vigilance in its preservation can be too great. Such liberty inspires courage and good hope in its defence. "Stand fast therefore. Quit yourselves like men."

How the Galatians responded to the Apostle's

* The reading of this clause is doubtful. The ancient witnesses disagree. Dr. Hort suggests that the Revised reading—the best attested, but scarcely grammatical—may be due to a primitive corruption, TH for EIT (ἐλευθερίᾳ). This emendation gives an excellent and apposite sense: *for (with a view to) freedom Christ set us free.* The phrase ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ is found in ver. 13, and would gain additional force there, if read as a repetition of what is affirmed here. The confusion of letters involved is a natural one; and once made at an early time in some standard copy, it would account for the extraordinary confusion of reading into which the verse has fallen. If conjectural emendation may be admitted anywhere in the N. T., it is legitimate in this instance.

challenge, we do not know. But it has found an echo in many a heart since. The Lutheran Reformation was an answer to it; so was the Scottish Covenant. The spirit of Christian liberty is eternal. Jerusalem or Rome may strive to imprison it. They might as well seek to bind the winds of heaven. Its home is with God. Its seat is the throne of Christ. It lives by the breath of His Spirit. The earthly powers mock at it, and drive it into the wilderness. They do but assure their own ruin. It leaves the house of the oppressor desolate. Whosoever he be—Judaist or Papist, priest, or king, or demagogue—that makes himself lord of God's heritage and would despoil His children of the liberties of faith, let him beware lest of him also it be spoken, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son."

CHAPTER XX.

SHALL THE GALATIANS BE CIRCUMCISED

"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace. For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love."—GAL. v. 2—6.

SHALL the Galatians be circumcised, or shall they not? This is the decisive question. The denunciation with which Paul begins his letter, the narrative which follows, the profou and rgumentation, the tender entreaty of the last two chapters, all converge toward this crucial point. So far the Galatian Churches had been only dallying with Judaism. They have been tempted to the verge of apostasy; but they are not yet over the edge. Till they consent to be circumcised, they have not finally committed themselves; their freedom is not absolutely lost. The Apostle still hopes, despite his fears, that they will stand fast (ver. 10; ch. iv. 11; iii. 4). The fatal step is eagerly pressed on them by the Judaizers (ch. vi. 12, 13), whose persuasion the Galatians had so far entertained, that they had begun to keep the Hebrew sabbath and feast-days (ch. iv. 10). If they yield to this further demand, the battle is lost; and this powerful Epistle, with all the

Apostle's previous labour spent upon them, has been in vain. To sever this section from the polemical in order to attach it to the practical part of the Epistle, as many commentators do, is to cut the nerve of the Apostle's argument and reduce it to an abstract theological discussion.

This momentous question is brought forward with the greater emphasis and effect, because it has hitherto been kept out of sight. The allusion to Titus in ch. ii. 1—5 has already indicated the supreme importance of the matter of circumcision. But the Apostle has delayed dealing with it formally and directly, until he is able to do so with the weight of the foregoing chapters to support his interdict. He has shattered the enemies' position with his artillery of logic, he has assailed the hearts of his readers with all the force of his burning indignation and subduing pathos. Now he gathers up his strength for the final charge home, which must decide the battle.

I. Lo, I PAUL TELL YOU! When he begins thus, we feel that the decisive moment is at hand. Everything depends on the next few words. Paul stands like an archer with his bow drawn at full stretch and the arrow pointed to the mark. "Let others say what they may; this is what *I* tell you. If my word has any weight with you, give heed to this: —IF YOU BE CIRCUMCISED, CHRIST WILL PROFIT YOU NOTHING."

Now his bolt is shot; we see what the Apostle has had in his mind all this time. Language cannot be more explicit. Some of his readers will have failed to catch the subtler points of his argument, or the finer tones of his voice of entreaty; but every one will understand this. The most "senseless" and volatile

amongst the Galatians will surely be sobered by the terms of this warning. There is no escaping the dilemma. Legalism and Paulinism, the true and the false gospel, stand front to front, reduced to their barest form, and weighed each in the balance of its practical result. *Christ—or Circumcision:* which shall it be?

This declaration is no less authoritative and judicially threatening than the anathema of ch. i. That former denouncement declared the false teachers severed from Christ. Those who yield to their persuasion, will be also "severed from Christ." They will fall into the same ditch as their blind leaders. The Judaizers have forfeited their part in Christ; they are false brethren, tares among the wheat, troublers and hinderers to the Church of God. And Gentile Christians who choose to be led astray by them must take the consequences. If they obey the "other gospel," Christ's gospel is theirs no longer. If they rest their faith on circumcision, they have withdrawn it from His cross. Adopting the Mosaic regimen, they forego the benefits of Christ's redemption. "Christ will profit you nothing." The sentence is negative, but no less fearful on that account. It is as though Christ should say, "Thou hast no part with Me."

Circumcision will cost the Galatian Christians all they possess in Jesus Christ. But is not this, some one will ask, an over-strained assertion? Is it consistent with Paul's professions and his policy in other instances? In ver. 6, and again in the last chapter, he declares that "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision nothing"; and yet here he makes it *everything!* The Apostle's position is this. In itself the rite is valueless. It was the sacrament of the Old Covenant, which was brought to an end by the death

of Christ. For the new Church of the Spirit, it is a matter of perfect indifference whether a man is circumcised or not. Paul had therefore circumcised Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess (Acts xvi. 1—3), though neither he nor his young disciple supposed that it was a religious necessity. It was done as a social convenience; "uncircumcision was nothing," and could in such a case be surrendered without prejudice. On the other hand, he refused to submit Titus to the same rite; for he was a pure Greek, and on him it could only have been imposed on religious grounds and as a passport to salvation. For this, and for no other reason, it was demanded by the Judaistic party. In this instance it was needful to show that "circumcision is nothing." The Galatians stood in the same position as Titus. Circumcision, if performed on them, must have denoted, not as in Timothy's case, the fact of Jewish birth, but *subjection to the Mosaic law.* Regarded in this light, the question was one of life or death for the Pauline Churches. To yield to the Judaizers would be to surrender the principle of salvation by faith. The attempt of the legalist party was in effect to force Christianity into the grooves of Mosaism, to reduce the world-wide Church of the Spirit to a sect of moribund Judaism.

With what views, with what aim were the Galatians entertaining this Judaic "persuasion"? Was it to make them sons of God and heirs of His kingdom? This was the object with which "God sent forth His Son;" and the Spirit of sonship assured them that it was realised (ch. iv. 4—7). To adopt the former means to this end was to renounce the latter. In turning their eyes to this new bewitchment, they must be conscious that their attention was diverted from the

Redeemer's cross and their confidence in it weakened (ch. iii. 1). To be circumcised would be to rest their salvation formally and definitely on works of law, in place of the grace of God. The consequences of this Paul has shown in relating his discussion with Peter, in ch. ii. 15—21. They would "make" themselves "transgressors;" they would "make Christ's death of none effect." In the soul's salvation Christ will be all, or nothing. If we trust Him, we must trust Him altogether. The Galatians had already admitted a suspicion of the power of His grace, which if cherished and acted on in the way proposed, must sever all communion between their souls and Him. Their circumcision would be "the sacrament of their excision from Christ" (Huxtable).

The tense of the verb is *present*. Paul's readers may be in the act of making this disastrous compliance. He bids them look for a moment at the depth of the gulf on whose brink they stand. "Stop!" he cries, "another step in that direction, and you have lost Christ."

And what will they get in exchange? They will saddle themselves with all the obligations of the Mosaic law (ver. 3). This probably was more than they bargained for. They wished to find a *via media*, some compromise between the new faith and the old, which would secure to them the benefits of Christ without His reproach, and the privileges of Judaism without its burdens. This at least was the policy of the Judaic teachers (ch. vi. 12, 13). But it was a false and untenable position. "Circumcision verily profiteth, *if thou art a doer of the law*" (Rom. ii. 25); otherwise it brings only condemnation. He who receives the sacrament of Mosaism, by doing so pledges himself to "keep

and do" every one of its "ordinances, statutes, and judgements"—a yoke which, honest Peter said, "Neither we nor our fathers were able to bear" (Acts xv. 10). Let the Galatians read the law, and consider what they are going to undertake. He who goes with the Judaists a mile, will be compelled to go twain. They will not find themselves at liberty to pick and choose amongst the legal requirements. Their legalist teachers will not raise a finger to lighten the yoke (Luke xi. 46), when it is once fastened on their necks; nor will their own consciences acquit them of its responsibilities. This obligation Paul, himself a master in Jewish law, solemnly affirms: "I protest (I declare before God) to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to perform the whole law."

Now this is a proved impossibility. Whoever "sets up the law," he had avouched to Cephas, "makes himself a transgressor" (ch. ii. 18). Nay, it was established of set purpose to "multiply transgressions," to deepen and sharpen the consciousness of sin (ch. iii. 19; Rom. iii. 20; iv. 15; v. 20). Jewish believers in Christ, placed under its power by their birth, had thankfully found in the faith of Christ a refuge from its accusations (ch. ii. 16; Rom. vii. 24—viii. 4). Surely the Galatians, knowing all this, will not be so foolish as to put themselves gratuitously under its power. To do this would be an insult to Christ, and an act of moral suicide. This further warning reinforces the first, and is uttered with equal solemnity. "I tell you, Christ will profit you nothing; and again I testify, the law will lay its full weight upon you." They will be left, without the help of Christ, to bear this tremendous burden.

This double threatening is blended into one in ver. 4.

The pregnant force of Paul's Greek is untranslatable. Literally his words run, "You were nullified from Christ (*κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ*)—brought to nought (being severed) from Him, you that in law are seeking justification." He puts his assertion in the past (*aorist*) tense, stating that which ensues so soon as the principle of legal justification is endorsed. From that moment the Galatians cease to be Christians. In this sense they "are abolished," just as "the cross is" virtually "abolished" if the Apostle "preaches circumcision" (ver. 11), and "death is being abolished" under the reign of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 26). He has said in ver. 2 that Christ will be made of none effect to them; now he adds that they "are made of none effect" in relation to Christ. Their Christian standing is destroyed. The joyous experiences of their conversion, their share in Abraham's blessing, their Divine sonship witnessed to by the Holy Spirit—all this is nullified, cancelled at a stroke, if they are circumcised. The detachment of their faith "from Christ" is involved in the process of attaching it to Jewish ordinances, and brings spiritual destruction upon them. The root of the Christian life is faith in Him. Let that root be severed, let the branch no longer "abide in the vine"—it is dead already.*

Cut off from Christ, they "have fallen from grace." Paul has already twice identified *Christ* and *grace*, in ch. i. 6 and ii. 21. The Divine mercies centre in Jesus Christ; and he who separates himself from Him, shuts these out of his soul. The verb here used by the Apostle (*ἐξεπέσατε*) is commonly applied (four times *e.g.* in Acts xxvii.) to a ship driven out of her

* Comp. John xv. 5, 6, where in *ἐβλήθη, ἐξηράνθη*, there is a like *summary* aorist.

course. Some such image seems to be in the writer's mind in this passage. These racers made an excellent start, but they have stumbled (ver. 7; ch. iii. 3); the vessel set out from harbour in gallant style, but she is drifting fast upon the rocks. This sentence "is the exact opposite of 'stand in the grace,' Rom. v. 2" (Beet).*

That he who "seeks justification in *law* has fallen from *grace*," needs no proof after the powerful demonstration of ch. ii. 14—21. The moralist claims quittance on the ground of his deservings. He pleads the quality of his "works," his punctual discharge of every stipulated duty, from circumcision onwards. "I fast twice a week," he tells his Divine Judge; "I tithe all my gains. I have kept all the commandments from my youth up." What can God expect more than this? But with these performances Grace has nothing to do. The man is not in its order. If he invokes its aid, it is as a make-weight, a supplement to the possible shortcomings in a virtue for the most part competent for itself. Now the grace of God is not to be set aside in this way; it refuses to be treated as a mere *succedaneum* of human virtue. Grace, like Christ, insists on being "all in all." "If salvation is by grace, it is no longer of works;" and "if of works, it is no more grace" (Rom. xi. 6). These two methods of justification imply different moral tempers, an opposite set and direction of the current of life. This question of circumcision brings the Galatians to the parting of the ways. *Grace* or *Law*—which of the two roads will they follow? Both they cannot. They may become Jewish proselytes; but they will cease to be Christians.

* Comp. 2 Pet. iii. 17; for the figure suggested, Eph. iv. 14; 1 Tim. i. 19.

Leaving behind them the light and joy of the heavenly Zion, they will find themselves wandering in the gloomy desolations of Sinai.

II. From this prospect the Apostle bids his readers turn to that which he himself beholds, and which they erewhile shared with him. Again he seems to say, "Be ye as I am, brethren" (ch. iv. 12); not in outward condition alone, but still more in inward experience and aspiration. "For *we* by the Spirit, on the ground of faith, are awaiting the hope of righteousness" (ver. 5).

Look on this picture, and on that. Yonder are the Galatians, all in tumult about the legalistic proposals, debating which of the Hebrew feasts they shall celebrate and with what rites, absorbed in the details of Mosaic ceremony, all but persuaded to be circumcised and to settle their scruples out of hand by a blind submission to the Law. And here, on the other side, is Paul with the Church of the Spirit, walking in the righteousness of faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit, joyfully awaiting the Saviour's final coming and the hope that is laid up in heaven. How vexed, how burdened, how narrow and puerile is the one condition of life; how large and lofty and secure the other. "We," says the Apostle "are looking *forwards* not backwards, to Christ and not to Moses."

Every word in this sentence is full of meaning. *Faith* carries an emphasis similar to that it has in ch. ii. 16; iii. 22; and in Rom. iv. 16. Paul supports by contrast what he has just said: "Your share in the kingdom of grace is lost who seek a legal righteousness (ver. 4); it is *by faith* that we look for our heritage." *Hope* is clearly *matter of hope*, the future glory of the redeemed, described in Rom. viii. 18—25, Phil. iii. 20, 21, in both of which places there appears the remark-

ably compounded verb (*ἀπ-εκ-δεχόμεθα*) that concludes this verse. It implies an intent expectancy, sure of its object and satisfied with it. The hope is "righteousness' hope"—the hope of the righteous—for it has in righteousness its warrant. The saying of Psalm xvi., verified in Christ's rising from the dead, contains its principle: "Thou wilt not leave my soul to death; nor suffer Thine holy one to see the pit." This was the secret "hope of Israel," * that grew up in the hearts of the men of faith, whose accomplishment is the crowning glory of the redemption of Christ. It is the goal of faith. Righteousness is the path that leads to it. The Galatians had been persuaded of this hope and embraced it; if they accept the "other gospel," with its phantom of a legal righteousness, their hope will perish.

The Apostle is always true to the order of thought here indicated. Faith saves from first to last. The present righteousness and future glory of the sons of God alike have their source in faith. The act of reliance by which the initial justification of the sinner was attained, now becomes the habit of the soul, the channel by which its life is fed, rooting itself ever more deeply into Christ and absorbing more completely the virtue of His death and heavenly life. Faith has its great ventures; it has also its seasons of endurance, its moods of quiet expectancy, its unwearable patience. It can wait as well as work. It rests upon the past, seeing in Christ crucified its "author;" then it looks on to the future, and claims Christ glorified for its "finisher." So faith prompts her sister Hope and points her to "the glory that shall be revealed." If faith fails, hope quickly dies. Unbelief is the mother

* Acts xxiii. 6; xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6–8; comp. John vi. 39, 40, 44.

of despair. "Of faith," the Apostle says, "we look out!"

A second condition, inseparable from the first, marks the hope proper to the Christian righteousness. It is sustained "by the Spirit." The connection of faith and hope respectively with the gift of the Holy Spirit is marked very clearly by Paul in Eph. i. 13, 14: "Having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is *the earnest of our inheritance*." The Holy Spirit seals the sons of God—"sons, then heirs" (ch. iv. 6, 7; Rom. viii. 15—17). This stamps on Christian hope a *spiritual* character. The conception which we form of it, the means by which it is pursued, the temper and attitude in which it is expected, are determined by the Holy Spirit who inspires it. This pure and celestial hope is therefore utterly removed from the selfish ambitions and the sensuous methods that distinguished the Judaistic movement (ch. iv. 3, 9; vi. 12—14). "Men of worldly, low design" like Paul's opponents in Galatia, had no right to entertain "the hope of righteousness." These matters are spiritually discerned; they are "the things of the Spirit, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9—14).

If faith and hope are in sight, *love* cannot be far off. In the next verse it comes to claim its place beside the other two: "faith working through love." And so the blessed trio is complete, *Fides, amor, spes: summa Christianismi* (Bengel). Faith waits, but it also *works*,*

* "*Working* through love," not *wrought* (R.V. *margin*). The latter rendering of the participle is found in some of the Fathers, and is preferred by Romanist interpreters in the interest of their doctrine of *fides formata*. Paul's theology and his verbal usage alike require the *middle* sense of this verb, adopted by modern commentators with one con-

and love is its working energy. Love gives faith hands and feet; hope lends it wings. Love is the fire at its heart, the life-blood coursing in its veins; hope the light that gleams and dances in its eyes. Looking back to the Christ that hath been manifested, faith kindles into a boundless love; looking onward to the Christ that shall be revealed, it rises into an exultant hope.

These closing words are of no little theological importance. "They bridge over the gulf which seems to separate the language of Paul and James. Both assert a principle of practical energy, as opposed to a barren, inactive theory" (Lightfoot). Had the faith of Paul's readers been more practical, had they been of a diligent, enterprising spirit, "ready for every good word and work," they would not have felt, to the same degree, the spell of the Judaistic fascination. Idle hands, vain and restless minds, court temptation. A manly, energetic faith will never play at ritualism or turn religion into a round of ceremonial, an æsthetic exhibition. Loving and self-devoting faith in Christ is the one thing Paul covets to see in the Galatians. This is the working power of the gospel, the force that will lift and regenerate mankind. In comparison with this, questions of Church-order and forms of worship are "nothing." "The body is more than the raiment." Church organization is a means to a certain end; and that end consists in the life of faith and love in Christian souls. Each man is worth to Christ and to

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sent. The middle voice implies that through love faith *gets into action, is operative, efficacious, shows what it can do.* Comp., for Pauline usage, Rom. vii. 5; 2 Cor. i. 6. iv. 12; Eph. iii. 20; Col. i. 29; 1 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 7; and see Moulton's Winer's *N. T. Grammar*, p. 318 (note on *dynamic middle*).

His Church just so much as he possesses of this energy of the Spirit, just so much as he has of love to Christ and to men in Him. Other gifts and qualities, offices and orders of ministry, are but instruments for love to employ, machinery for love to energize.

The Apostle wishes it to be understood that he does not condemn circumcision on its own account, as though the opposite condition were in itself superior. If "circumcision does not avail anything, *neither does uncircumcision*." The Jew is no better or worse a Christian because he is circumcised; the Gentile no worse or better, because he is not. This difference in no way affects the man's spiritual standing or efficiency. Let the Galatians dismiss the whole question from their minds. "One thing is needful," to be filled with the Spirit of love. "God's kingdom is not meat and drink;" it is not "days and seasons and years;" it is not circumcision, nor rubrics and vestments and priestly functions; it is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." These are the true *notes* of the Church; "by love," said Christ, "all men will know that you are My disciples."

In these two sentences (vv. 5 and 6) the religion of Christ is summed up. Ver. 5 gives us its *statics*; ver. 6 its *dynamics*. It is a condition, and an occupation; a grand outlook, and an intent pursuit; a Divine hope for the future, and a sovereign power for the present, with an infinite spring of energy in the love of Christ. The active and passive elements of the Christian life need to be justly balanced. Many of the errors of the Church have arisen from one-sidedness in this respect. Some do nothing but sit with folded hands till the Lord comes; others are too busy to think of His coming at all. So waiting degenerates into in-

dolence; and serving into feverish hurry and anxiety, or mechanical routine. Let hope give calmness and dignity, buoyancy and brightness to our work; let work make our hope sober, reasonable, practical.

"These three abide—faith, hope, and love." They cannot change while God is God and man is man. Forms of dogma and of worship have changed and must change. There is a perpetual "removing of the things that are shaken, as of things that are made;" but through all revolutions there "remain the things which are not shaken." To these let us rally. On these let us build. New questions thrust themselves to the front, touching matters as little essential to the Church's life as that of circumcision in the Apostolic age. The evil is that we make so much of them. In the din of controversy we grow bewildered; our eyes are blinded with its dust; our souls chafed with its fretting. We lose the sense of proportion; we fail to see who are our true friends, and who our foes. We need to return to the simplicity that is in Christ. Let us "consider Him"—Christ incarnate, dying, risen, reigning—till we are changed into the same image, till His life has wrought itself into ours. Then these questions of dispute will fall into their proper place. They will resolve themselves; or wait patiently for their solution. Loyalty to Jesus Christ is the only solvent of our controversies.

Will the Galatians be true to Christ? Or will they renounce their righteousness in Him for a legal status, morally worthless, and which will end in taking from them the hope of eternal life? They have nothing to gain, they have everything to lose in submitting to circumcision.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HINDERERS AND TROUBLERS.

"Ye were running well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion *came* not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence to you-ward, in the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgement, whosoever he be. But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? then hath the stumblingblock of the cross been done away. I would that they which unsettle you would even mutilate themselves."—GAL. v. 7—12.

THE Apostle's controversy with the Legalists is all but concluded. He has pronounced on the question of circumcision. He has shown his readers, with an emphasis and clearness that leave nothing more to be said, how fearful is the cost at which they will accept the "other gospel," and how heavy the yoke which it will impose upon them. A few further observations remain to be made—of regret, of remonstrance, blended with expressions of confidence more distinct than any the Apostle has hitherto employed. Then with a last contemptuous thrust, a sort of *coup de grace* for the Circumcisionists, Paul passes to the practical and ethical part of his letter.

This section is made up of short, disconnected sentences, shot off in various directions; as though the writer wished to have done with the Judaistic debate, and would discharge at a single volley the arrows

remaining in his quiver. Its prevailing tone is that of conciliation towards the Galatians (comp. Chapter XVIII.), with increasing severity towards the legalist teachers. "See how bitter he is against the deceivers. For indeed at the beginning he directed his censures against the deceived, calling them 'senseless' both once and again. But now that he has sufficiently chastened and corrected them, for the rest he turns against their deceivers. And we should observe his wisdom in both these things, in that he admonishes the one party and brings them to a better mind, being his own children and capable of amendment; but the deceivers, who are a foreign element and incurably diseased, he cuts off" (Chrysostom).

There lie before us therefore in this paragraph the following considerations:—*Paul's hope concerning the Galatian Churches, his protest on his own behalf,* and finally, *his judgement respecting the troublers.*

I. The more hopeful strain of the letter at this point appears to be due to the effect of his argument upon the writer's own mind. As the breadth and grandeur of the Christian faith open out before him, and he contrasts its spiritual glory with the ignoble aims of the Circumcisionists, Paul cannot think that the readers will any longer doubt which is the true gospel. Surely they will be disenchanted. His irrefragable reasonings, his pleading entreaties and solemn warnings are bound to call forth a response from a people so intelligent and so affectionate. "For my part," he says, "*I am confident in the Lord that you will be no otherwise minded* (ver. 10), that you will be faithful to your Divine calling, despite the hindrances thrown in your way." They will, he is persuaded, come to see the proposals of the Judaizers in their proper light. They will think about

the Christian life—its objects and principles—as he himself does; and will perceive how fatal would be the step they are urged to take. They will be true to themselves and to the Spirit of sonship they have received. They will pursue more earnestly the hope set before them and give themselves with renewed energy to the work of faith and love (vv. 5, 6), and forget as soon as possible this distracting and unprofitable controversy.

"In the Lord" Paul cherishes this confidence. "In Christ's grace" the Galatians were called to enter the kingdom of God (ver. 8; ch. i. 6); and He was concerned that the work begun in them should be completed (Phil. i. 6). It may be the Apostle at this moment was conscious of some assurance from his Master that his testimony in this Epistle would not prove in vain. The recent * submission of the Corinthians would tend to increase Paul's confidence in his authority over the Gentile Churches.

Another remembrance quickens the feeling of hope with which the Apostle draws the conflict to a close. He reminds himself of the good confession the Galatians had aforetime witnessed,† the zeal with which they pursued the Christian course, until this deplorable hindrance arose: "You were running well—*finely*. You had fixed your eyes on the heavenly prize. Filled with an ardent faith, you were zealously pursuing the great spiritual ends of the Christian life (comp. vv. 5, 6). Your progress has been arrested. You have yielded to influences which are not of God who called you, and admitted amongst you a leaven that, if not cast

* See Chapter I, pp. 15, 16, on the *date* of the Epistle.
† Comp. ch. iii. 4: "*ye suffered so many things.*"

out, will corrupt you utterly (vv. 8, 9). But I trust that this result will be averted. You will return to better thoughts. You will resume the interrupted race, and by God's mercy will be enabled to bring it to a glorious issue" (ver. 10).

There is kindness and true wisdom in this encouragement. The Apostle has "told them the truth;" he has "reproved with all authority;" now that this is done, their remains nothing in his heart but good-will and good wishes for his Galatian children. If his chiding has wrought the effect it was intended to produce, then these words of softened admonition will be grateful and healing. They have "stumbled, but not that they might fall." The Apostle holds out the hand of restoration; his confidence animates them to hope better things for themselves. He turns his anger away from them, and directs it altogether upon their injurers.

II. The Judaizers had troubled the Churches of Galatia; *they had also maligned the Apostle Paul.* From them undoubtedly the imputation proceeded which he repudiates so warmly in ver. 11: "And I, brethren, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still persecuted?" This supposition a moment's reflection would suffice to refute. The contradiction was manifest. The persecution which everywhere followed the Apostle marked him out in all men's eyes as the adversary of Legalism.

There were circumstances, however, that lent a certain colour to this calumny. The circumcision of Timothy, for instance, might be thought to look in this direction (Acts xvi. 1—3). And Paul valued his Hebrew birth. He loved his Jewish brethren more than his own salvation (Rom. ix. 1—5; xi. 1). There was nothing of the revolutionary or the inconoclast

about him. Personally he preferred to conform to the ancient usages, when doing so did not compromise the honour of Christ (Acts xviii. 18; xxi. 17—26). It was false that he "taught the Jews not to circumcise their children, nor to walk by the customs" (Acts xxi. 20—26). He did teach them that these things were "of no avail in Christ Jesus;" that they were in no sense necessary to salvation; and that it was contrary to the will of Christ to impose them upon Gentiles. But it was no part of his business to alter the social customs of his people, or to bid them renounce the glories of their past. While he insists that "there is no difference" between Jew and Gentile in their need of the gospel and their rights in it, he still claims for the Jew the first place in the order of its manifestation.

This was an entirely different thing from "preaching circumcision" in the legalist sense, from heralding (*κηρύσσω*: ver. 11) and crying up the Jewish ordinance, and making it a religious duty. This difference the Circumcisionists affected not to understand. Some of Paul's critics will not understand it even now. They argue that the Apostle's hostility to Judaism in this Epistle discredits the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles, inasmuch as the latter relates several instances of Jewish conformity on his part. What pragmatical narrowness is this! Paul's adversaries said, "He derides Judaism amongst you Gentiles, who know nothing of his antecedents, or of his practice in other places. But when he pleases, this liberal Paul will be as zealous for circumcision as any of us. Indeed he boasts of his skill in 'becoming all things to all men;' he trims his sail to every breeze. In *Galatia* he is all breadth and tolerance; he talks about our 'liberty which we have in Christ Jesus;' he is ready to 'become

as you are;' no one would imagine he had ever been a Jew. In *Judea* he makes a point of being strictly orthodox, and is indignant if any one questions his devotion to the Law."

Paul's position was a delicate one, and open to misrepresentation. Men of party insist on this or that external custom as the badge of their own side; they have their party-colours and their uniform. Men of principle adopt or lay aside such usages with a freedom which scandalizes the partisan. What right, he says, has any one to wear our colours, to pronounce our shibboleth, if he is not one of ourselves? If the man will not be with us, let him be against us. Had Paul renounced his circumcision and declared himself a Gentile out and out, the Judaists might have understood him. Had he said, *Circumcision is evil*, they could have endured it better; but to preach that *Circumcision is nothing*, to reduce this all-important rite to insignificance, vexed them beyond measure. It was in their eyes plain proof of dishonesty. They tell the Galatians that Paul is playing a double part, that his resistance to their circumcision is interested and insincere.

The charge is identical with that of "man-pleasing" which the Apostle repelled in ch. i. 10 (see Chapter III). The emphatic "still" of that passage recurs twice in this, bearing the same meaning as it does there. Its force is not *temporal*, as though the Apostle were thinking of a former time when he did "preach circumcision:" no such reference appears in the context, and these terms are inappropriate to his pre-Christian career. The particle points a *logical* contrast, as *e.g.* in Rom. iii. 7; ix. 19: "If I still (notwithstanding my professions as a Gentile apostle) preach circumcision, why am I still (notwithstanding my so preaching) perse-

cuted?" Had Paul been known by the Jews to be in other places a promoter of circumcision, they would have treated him very differently. He could not then have been, as the Galatians knew him everywhere to be, "in perils from his fellow-countrymen."

The rancour of the Legalists was sufficient proof of Paul's sincerity. They were themselves guilty of the baseness with which they taxed him. It was in order to escape the reproach of the cross (ver. 11), to atone for their belief in the Nazarene, that they persuaded Gentile Christians to be circumcised (ch. vi. 11, 12). *They* were the man-pleasers. The Judaizers knew perfectly well that the Apostle's observance of Jewish usage was no endorsement of their principles. The print of the Jewish scourge upon his back attested his loyalty to Gentile Christendom (ch. vi. 17; 2 Cor. xi. 24). A further consequence would have ensued from the duplicity imputed to Paul, which he resents even more warmly: "Then," he says, "if I preach circumcision, the offence of the cross is done away!" He is charged with treason against the cross of Christ. He has betrayed the one thing in which he glories (ch. vi. 14), to which the service of his life was consecrated! For the doctrine of the cross was at an end if the legal ritual were re-established and men were taught to trust in the saving efficacy of circumcision—above all, if the Apostle of the Gentiles had preached this doctrine! The Legalists imputed to him the very last thing of which he was capable. This was in fact the error into which Peter had weakly fallen at Antioch. The Jewish Apostle had then acted as though "Christ died in vain" (ch. ii. 21). For himself Paul indignantly denies that his conduct bore any such construction.

But he says, "*the scandal* of the cross"—that scan-

dalous, offensive cross, the stumbling-block of Jewish pride (1 Cor. i. 23). The death of Christ was not only revolting in its form to Jewish sentiment;* it was a fatal event for Judaism itself. It imported the end of the Mosaic economy. The Church at Jerusalem had not yet fully grasped this fact; they sought, as far as possible, to live on good terms with their non-Christian Jewish brethren, and admitted perhaps too easily into their fellowship men who cared more for Judaism than for Christ and His cross. For them also the final rupture was approaching, when they had to "go forth unto Jesus without the camp." Paul had seen from the first that the breach was irreparable. He determined to keep his Gentile Churches free from Judaic entanglements. In his view, Calvary was the terminus of Mosaism.

This was true *historically*. The crime of national Judaism in slaying its Messiah was capital. Its spiritual blindness and its moral failure had received the most signal proof. The congregation of Israel had become a synagogue of Satan. And these were "the chosen people," the world's *élite*, who "crucified the Lord of glory!" *Mankind* had done this thing. The world has "both seen and hated both Him and the Father." Now to set up circumcision again, or any kind of human effort or performance, as a ground of justification before God, is to ignore this judgement; it is to make void the sentence which the cross of Christ has passed upon all "works of righteousness which we have done." This teaching sorely offends moralists and ceremonialists, of whatever age or school; it is "the offence of the cross."

* Comp. Chapter XII, pp. 193—4.

And further, as matter of *Divine appointment* the sacrifice of Calvary put an end to Jewish ordinances. Their significance was gone. The Epistle to the Hebrews developes this consequence at length in other directions. For himself the Apostle views it from a single and very definite standpoint. The Law, he says, had brought on men a curse; it stimulated sin to its worst developments (ch. iii. 10, 19). Christ's death under this curse has expiated and removed it for us (ch. iii. 13). His atonement met man's guilt in its culmination. The Law had not prevented—nay, it gave occasion to the crime; it necessitated, but could not provide expiation, which was supplied "outside the law" (Rom. iii. 21: *χώρις νόμου*). The "offence" of the doctrine of the cross lay just here. It reconciled man with God on an extra-legal footing. It provided a new ground of justification and pronounced the old worthless. It fixed the mark of moral impotence and rejection upon the system to which the Jewish nature clung with passionate pride. To preach the cross was to declare legalism abolished: to preach circumcision was to declare the cross and its offence abolished.

This dilemma the Circumcisionists would fain escape. They fought shy of Calvary. Like some later moralists, they did not see why the cross should be always pushed to the front, and its offence forced upon the world. Surely there was in the wide range of Christian truth abundance of other profitable topics to discuss, without wounding Jewish susceptibilities in this way. But this endeavour of theirs is just what Paul is determined to frustrate. He confronts Judaism at every turn with that dreadful cross. He insists that it shall be realised in its horror and its shame, that men shall feel the tremendous shock which it gives to the moral conceit,

the self-justifying spirit of human nature, which in the Jew of this period had reached its extreme point. "If law could save, if the world were not guilty before God," he reiterates, "why that death of the cross? God hath set Him forth *a propitiation*." And whoso accepts Jesus Christ must accept Him *crucified*, with all the offence and humiliation that the fact involves.

In later days the death of Christ has been made void in other ways. It is veiled in the steam of our incense. It is invested with the halo of a sensuous glorification. The cross has been for many turned into an artistic symbol, a beautiful idol, festooned with garlands, draped in poetry, but robbed of its spiritual meaning, its power to humble and to save. Let men see it "openly set forth," in its naked terror and majesty, that they may know what they are and what their sins have done.

We rely on birth and good breeding, on art and education as instruments of moral progress. Improved social arrangements, a higher environment, these, we think, will elevate the race. Within their limits these forces are invaluable; they are ordained of God. But they are only *law* at the best. When they have done their utmost, they leave man still unsaved—proud, selfish, unclean, miserable. To rest human salvation on self-improvement and social reform, is legalism over again. To civilise is not to regenerate. These methods were tried in Mosaism, under circumstances in many respects highly favourable. "The scandal of the cross" was the result. Education and social discipline may produce a Pharisee, nothing higher. Legislation and environment work from the outside. They cannot touch the essential human heart. Nothing has ever done this like the cross of Jesus Christ. He who "makes it of none effect," whether in the name

of Jewish tradition or of modern progress, takes away the one practicable hope of the moral regeneration of mankind.

III. We are now in a position to estimate more precisely the character and motives of the Judaistic party, *the hinderers and troublers* of this Epistle.

In the first place, it appears that they had entered the Galatian communities from without. The fact that they are called *troublers* (*disturbers*) of itself suggests this (ver. 10; ch. i. 7). They came with a professed "gospel," as messengers bringing new tidings; the Apostle compares them to himself, the first Galatian evangelist, "or an angel from heaven" (ch. i. 8, 9). He glances at them in his reference to "false brethren" at an earlier time "brought into (the Gentile Church) unawares" (ch. ii. 4). These men are "courting" the favour of Paul's Galatian disciples, endeavouring to gain them over in his absence (ch. iv. 17, 18). They have made misleading statements respecting his early career and relations to the Church, which he is at pains to correct. They professed to represent the views of the Pillars at Jerusalem, and quoted their authority against the Apostle Paul.

From these considerations we infer that "the troublers" were *Judaistic emissaries from Palestine.* The second Epistle to Corinth, contemporaneous with this letter, reveals the existence of a similar propaganda in the Greek capital at the same period. Paul had given the Galatians warning on the subject at his last visit (ch. i. 9). There were already, we should suppose, in the Galatian societies, before the arrival of the Judaizers, Jewish believers in Christ of legalistic tendencies, prepared to welcome and support the new teachers. But it was the coming of these agitators from

without that threw the Churches of Galatia into such a ferment, and brought about the situation disclosed in this Epistle.

The allusion made in chap. ii. 12 to "certain from James,"* taken in connection with other circumstances, points, as we think, to the outbreak of a systematic agitation against the Apostle Paul, which was carried on during his third missionary tour, and drew from him the great evangelical Epistles of this epoch. This anti-Pauline movement emanated from Jerusalem and pretended to official sanction. Set on foot at the time of the collision with Peter at Antioch, the conflict is now in full progress. The Apostle's denunciation of his opponents is unsparing. They "hinder" the Galatians "from obeying truth" (ver. 7); they entice them from the path in which they had bravely set out, and are robbing them of their heritage in Christ. It was a false, a perverted gospel that they taught (ch. i. 7). They cast on their hearers an envious spell which drew them away from the cross and its salvation (ch. ii. 21; iii. 1). Not truth, but self-interest and party-ends were the objects they pursued (ch. iv. 17; vi. 12, 13). Their "persuasion" was assuredly not of God, "who had called" the Galatians through the Apostle's voice. If God had sent Paul amongst them, as the Galatians had good reason to know, clearly He had not sent these men, with their "other gospel."

The vitiating "leaven" at work in the spiritual life of the Galatians, if not arrested, would soon "leaven the whole lump." The Apostle applies to the Judaistic doctrine the same figure under which he described the

* Compare Chapter IX, pp. 131—4. We refer this occurrence to the interval between the second and third of Paul's missionary journeys (Acts xviii. 22), A.D. 54.

taint of immorality found in the Church of Corinth (1 Cor. v. 6—8). So zealous and unscrupulous, so deadly in its effect on evangelical faith and life was the spirit of Jewish legalism. The Apostle trusts that his Galatians will after all escape from this fatal infection, that they will leave "the troublers" alone to "bear the judgement" which must fall upon them (ver. 10). The Lord is the Keeper, and the Avenger of His Church. No one, "whosoever he be," will injure it with impunity. Let the man that makes mischief in the Church of Jesus Christ take care what he is about. The tempted may escape; sins of ignorance and weakness can be forgiven. But woe unto the tempter!

Against the wilful perverters of the gospel the Apostle at the outset delivered his anathema. For these Circumcisionists in particular he has one further wish to express. It is a grim sort of suggestion, to be read rather by way of sarcasm than in the strict letter of fulfilment. The devotees of circumcision, he means to say, might as well go a step farther. If the physical mark of Judaism, the mere surgical act, is so salutary, why not "cut off" the member altogether, like the emasculated priests of Cybelé? (ver. 12).* This mutilation belonged to the worship of the great heathen goddess of Asia Minor, and was associated with her debasing cultus. Moreover it excluded its victim from a place in the congregation of Israel (Deut. xxiii. 1).

* The rendering of the R.V. *margin* is that of all the Greek interpreters, and of Meyer, Lightfoot, Beet, and the strict grammatical commentators amongst the moderns. The form and usage of the verb do not allow of any other. Apart from its unseemliness, the expression is powerfully appropriate. This condemnation of the Old-Testament sacrament is not more severe than the language of Isa. lxvi. 3: "He that slaughtereth an ox is a man-slayer, he that bringeth a meal-offering —it is *swine's blood*."

This mockery, though not to be judged by modern sentiment, in any case went to the verge of what charity and decency permit. It breathes a burning contempt for the Judaizing policy. It shows how utterly circumcision had lost its sacredness for the Apostle. Its spiritual import being gone, it was now a mere "concision" (Phil. iii. 2), a cutting of the body—nothing more.

Such language was well calculated to disgust Gentile Christians with the rite of circumcision. It helps to account for the implacable hatred with which Paul was regarded by orthodox Jews. It accords with what he intimated in ch. iv. 9, to the effect that Jewish conformity was for the Gentiles in effect *heathenish.* Apart from its relation to the obsolete Mosaic covenant, circumcision was in itself no holier than the deformities inflicted by Paganism on its votaries.

The Judaizers are finally described, not merely as "troublers" and "hinderers," but as "those that *unsettle* you"—or more strongly still, "*overthrow* you." The Greek word (*ἀναστατέω*) occurs in Acts xvii. 6, xxi. 38, where it is rendered, *turn upside down, stir to sedition.* These men were carrying on a treasonable agitation. False themselves to the gospel of Christ, they incited the Galatians to belie their Christian professions, to betray the cause of Gentile liberty, and to desert their own Apostle. They deserved to suffer some degrading punishment. "Full" as they were "of subtlety and mischief, perverting the right ways of the Lord," Paul did well to denounce them and to turn their zeal for circumcision to derisive scorn.

THE ETHICAL APPLICATION.

CHAPTER v. 13—vi. 10.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PERILS OF LIBERTY.

"For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only *use* not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."—GAL. v. 13—15.

OUR analysis has drawn a strong line across the middle of this chapter. At ver. 13 the Apostle turns his mind in the ethical direction. He has dismissed "the troublers" with contempt in ver. 12; and until the close of the Epistle does not mention them again; he addresses his readers on topics in which they are left out of view. But this third, ethical section of the letter is still continuous with its polemical and doctrinal argument.

It applies the maxim of ver. 6, "Faith works through love"; it reminds the Galatians how they had "received the Spirit of God" (ch. iii. 2, 3; iv. 6). The rancours and jealousies opposed to love, the carnal mind that resists the Spirit—these are the objects of Paul's dehortations. The moral disorders which the Apostle seeks to correct arose largely out of the mischief caused by the Judaizers. And his exhortations to love and good works are themselves indirectly polemical. They vindicate Paul's gospel from the charge of antinomianism, while they guard Christians from giving

occasion to the charge. They protect from exaggeration and abuse the liberty already defended from legalistic encroachments. The more precious and sacred is the freedom of Gentile believers, the more on the one hand do those deserve punishment who would defraud them of it; and the more earnestly must they on their part guard this treasure from misuse and dishonour. In this sense ver. 13*a* stands between the sentence against the Circumcisionists in ver. 12 and the appeal to the Galatians that follows. It repeats the proclamation of freedom made in ver. 1, making it the ground at once of the judgement pronounced against the foes of freedom and the admonition addressed to its possessors. "*For you were called* (summoned by God to enter the kingdom of His Son) *with a view to liberty*—not to legal bondage; nor, on the other hand, that you might run into licence and give the reins to self-will and appetite—not *liberty for an occasion to the flesh.*"

I. Here lies *the danger of liberty*, especially when conferred on a young, untrained nature, and in a newly emancipated community.

Freedom is a priceless boon; but it is a grave responsibility. It has its temptations, as well as its joys and dignities. The Apostle has spoken at length of the latter: it is the former that he has now to urge. Keep your liberties, he seems to say; for Christ's sake and for truth's sake hold them fast, guard them well. You are God's regenerated sons. Never forego your high calling. God is on your side; and those who assail you shall feel the weight of His displeasure. Yes, "stand fast" in the liberty wherewith "Christ made you free." But take care how you employ your freedom; "only use not liberty for an occasion to the

flesh." This significant *only* turns the other side of the medal, and bids us read the legend on its reverse front. On the obverse we have found it written, "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19; comp. Gal. iv. 6, 9). This is the side of *privilege* and of grace, the spiritual side of the Christian life. On the reverse it bears the motto, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." This is the second, the ethical side of our calling, the side of *duty*, to which we have now to turn.

The man, or the nation that has won its freedom, has won but half the battle. It has conquered external foes; it has still to prevail over itself. And this is the harder task. Men clamour for liberty, when they mean licence; what they seek is the liberty of the flesh, not of the Spirit, freedom to indulge their lusts and to trample on the rights of others, the freedom of outlaws and brigands. The natural man defines freedom as the power to do as he likes; not the right of self-regulation, but the absence of regulation is what he desires. And this is just what the Spirit of God will never allow (ver. 17). When such a man has thrown off outward constraint and the dread of punishment, there is no inward law to take its place. It is his greed, his passion, his pride and ambition that call for freedom; not his conscience. And to all such libertarians our Saviour says, "He that committeth sin is *the slave of sin*." No tyrant is so vile, so insatiable as our own self-indulged sin. A pitiable triumph, for a man to have secured his religious liberty only to become the thrall of his vices!

It is possible that some men accepted the gospel under the delusion that it afforded a shelter for sin. The sensualist, deterred from his indulgences by fear

of the Law, joined in Paul's campaign against it, imagining that Grace would give him larger freedom. If "where sin abounded grace did superabound," he would say in his heart, Why not sin the more, so that grace might have a greater victory? This is no fanciful inference. Hypocrisy has learned to wear the garb of evangelical zeal; and teachers of the gospel have not always guarded sufficiently against this shocking perversion. Even the man whose heart has been truly touched and changed by Divine grace, when the freshness of his first love to Christ has passed away and temptation renews its assaults, is liable to this deception. He may begin to think that sin is less perilous, since forgiveness was so easily obtained. He may presume that as a son of God, sealed by the Spirit of adoption, he will not be allowed to fall, even though he stumble. He is one of "God's elect"; what "shall separate him" from the Divine love in Christ? In this assurance he holds a talisman that secures his safety. What need to "watch and pray lest he enter into temptation," when the Lord is his keeper? He is God's enfranchised son; "all things are lawful" to him; "things present" as well as "things to come" are his in Christ. By such reasonings his liberty is turned into an *occasion to the flesh*. And men who before they boasted themselves sons of God were restrained by the spirit of bondage and fear, have found in this assurance the occasion, the "starting-point" (ἀφορμή) for a more shameless course of evil.

In the view of Legalism, this is the natural outcome of Pauline teaching. From the first it has been charged with fostering lawlessness. In the Lutheran Reformation Rome pointed to the Antinomians, and moralists of our own day speak of "canting Evangelicals," just

as the Judaists alleged the existence of immoral Paulinists, whose conduct, they declared, was the proper fruit of the preaching of emancipation from the Law. These, they would say to the Apostle, are your spiritual children; they do but carry your doctrine to its legitimate issue. This reproach the gospel has always had to bear; there have been those, alas, amongst its professors whose behaviour has given it plausibility. Sensualists will "turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness;" swine will trample under their feet the pure pearls of the gospel. But they are pure and precious none the less.

This possibility is, however, a reason for the utmost watchfulness in those who are stewards in the administration of the gospel. They must be careful, like Paul, to make it abundantly clear that they "establish" and do not "make void law through faith" (Rom. iii. 31). There is an evangelical Ethics, as well as an evangelical Dogmatics. The ethics of the Gospel have been too little studied and applied. Hence much of the confessed failure of evangelical Churches in preserving and building up the converts that they win.

II. Faith in Christ gives in truth a new efficacy to the moral law. For it works through love; and love fulfils all laws in one (vv. 13*b*, 14). Where faith has this operation, liberty is safe; not otherwise. *Love's slaves are the true freemen.*

The legalist practically takes the same view of human nature as the sensualist. He knows nothing of "the desire of the Spirit" arrayed against that of the flesh (ver. 17), nothing of the mastery over the heart that belongs to the love of Christ. In his analysis the soul consists of so many desires, each blindly seeking its own gratification, which must be drilled into order

under external pressure, by an intelligent application of law. Modern Utilitarians agree with the ancient Judaists in their ethical philosophy. Fear of punishment, hope of reward, the influence of the social environment—these are, as they hold, the factors which create character and shape our moral being. "Pain and pleasure," they tell us, "are the masters of human life." Without the faith that man is the child of God, formed in His image, we are practically shut up to this suicidal theory of morals. *Suicidal* we say, for it robs our spiritual being of everything distinctive in it, of all that raises the moral above the natural; it makes duty and personality illusions.

Judaism is a proof that this scheme of life is impracticable. For the Pharisaic system which produced such deplorable moral results, was an experiment in external ethics. It was in fact the application of a highly developed and elaborate traditional code of law, enforced by the strongest outward sanctions, *without personal loyalty to the Divine Lawgiver.* In the national conscience of the Jews this was wanting. Their faith in God, as the Epistle of James declares, was a "dead" faith, a bundle of abstract notions. Loyalty is true law-keeping. And loyalty springs from the personal relationship of the subject and the law-making power. This nexus Christian sonship supplies, in its purest and most exalted form. When I see in the Lawgiver my Almighty Father, when the law has become incarnate in the person of my Saviour, my heart's King and Lord, it wears a changed aspect. "*His commandments* are not grievous." Duty, required by Him, is honour and delight. No abstract law, no "stream of tendency" can command the homage or awaken the moral energy that is inspired by "the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Here the Apostle traverses antinomian deductions from his doctrine of liberty. In the Epistle to the Romans (ch. vi.) he deals at length with the theoretical objection to his teaching on this subject. He shows there that salvation by faith, rightly understood and experienced, renders continuance in sin impossible. For faith in Christ is in effect the union of the soul with Christ, first in His death, and then consequently in His risen life, wherein He lives only "to God." Nay, Christ Himself lives in the believing man (Gal. ii. 20). Instead of our sinning "because we are not under the law, but under grace," this is precisely the reason why we need not and must not sin. Faith joins us to the risen Christ, whose life we share—so Paul argues—and we should not sin any more than He. Here, from the practical standpoint, he lays it down that *faith works by love; and love casts out sin, for it unites all laws in itself.* Faith links us to Christ in heaven (Romans); faith fills us with His love on earth (Galatians). So love, marked out in ver. 6 as the energy of faith, now serves as the guard of liberty. Neither legalist nor law-breaker understands the meaning of faith in Christ.

At this point Paul throws in one of his bold paradoxes. He has been contending all through the Epistle for freedom, bidding his readers scorn the legal yoke, breathing into them his own contempt for the pettiness of Judaistic ceremonial. But now he turns round suddenly and bids them *be slaves:* "but let love," he says, "make you bondmen to each other" (ver. 13). Instead of breaking bonds, he seeks to create stronger bonds, stronger because dearer. Paul preaches no gospel of individualism, of egotistic salvation-seeking. The self-sacrifice of Christ becomes in turn a principle of sacrifice in those who receive it. Paul's own ideal

is, to be "conformed to His death" (Phil. iii. 10). There is nothing anarchic or self-asserting in his plea for freedom. He opposes the law of Pharisaic externalism in the interests of the law of Christian love. The yoke of Judaism must be broken, its bonds cast aside, in order to give free play to "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Faith transfers authority from flesh to spirit, giving it a surer seat, a more effective, and in reality more lawful command over man's nature. It restores the normal equipoise of the soul. Now the Divine law is written on "the tablets of the heart"; and this makes it far more sovereign than when engraved on the stone slabs of Sinai. Love and law for the believer in Christ are fused into one. In this union law loses nothing of its holy severity; and love nothing of its tenderness. United they constitute the Christian sense of *duty*, whose sternest exactions are enforced by gratitude and devotion.

And love is ever conqueror. To it toil and endurance that mock the achievement of other powers, are a light thing. Needing neither bribe nor threat, love labours, waits, braves a thousand dangers, keeps the hands busy, the eye keen and watchful, the feet running to and fro untired through the longest day. There is no industry, no ingenuity like that of love. Love makes the mother the slave of the babe at her breast, and wins from the friend for his friend service that no compulsion could exact, rendered in pure gladness and free-will. Its power alone calls forth what is best and strongest in us all. Love is mightier than death. In Jesus Christ, love has "laid down life for its friends"; the fulness of life has encountered and overcome the uttermost of death. Love esteems it bondage to be prevented, liberty only to be allowed to serve.

Without love, freedom is an empty boon. It brings no ease, no joy of heart. It is objectless and listless. Bereft of faith and love, though possessing the most perfect independence, the soul drifts along like a ship rudderless and masterless, with neither haven nor horizon. Wordsworth, in his Ode to Duty, has finely expressed the weariness that comes of such liberty, unguided by an inward law and a Divine ideal:

> "Me this unchartered freedom tires;
> I feel the weight of chance desires:
> My hopes no more must change their name;
> I long for a repose that ever is the same."

But on the other hand,

> "Serene will be our days and bright,
> And happy will our nature be,
> When love is an unerring light,
> And joy its own security."

This "royal law" (Jam. ii. 8) blends with its sovereignty of power the charm of simplicity. "The whole law," says the Apostle, "hath been fulfilled in one word—LOVE" (ver. 14). The Master said, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil." The key to His fulfilment was given in the declaration of the twofold command of love to God and to our neighbour. "On these two hang all the law and the prophets." Hence the Apostle's phrase, *hath been fulfilled.* This unification of the moral code is accomplished. Christ's life and death have given to this truth full expression and universal currency. Love's fulfilment of law stands before us a positive attainment, an incontestable fact. Paul does not speak here, as in Rom. xiii. 9, of the comprehending, the "summing up" of all laws in one; but of the bringing of law to its completion, its realisa-

tion and consummation in the love of Christ. "O how I love Thy law," said the purer spirit of the Old Testament. "Thy love is my law," says the true spirit of the New.

It is remarkable that this supreme principle of Christian ethics is first enunciated in the most legal part of the Old Testament. Leviticus is the Book of the Priestly Legislation. It is chiefly occupied with ceremonial and civil regulations. Yet in the midst of the legal minutiæ is set this sublime and simple rule, than which Jesus Christ could prescribe nothing more Divine: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* (Levit. xix. 18). This sentence is the conclusion of a series of directions (vv. 9—18) forbidding unneighbourly conduct, each of them sealed with the declaration, "I am Jehovah." This brief code of brotherly love breathes a truly Christian spirit; it is a beautiful expression of "the law of kindness" that is on the lips and in the heart of the child of God. We find in the law-book of Mosaism, side by side with elaborate rules of sacrificial ritual and the homeliest details touching the life of a rude agricultural people, conceptions of God and of duty of surpassing loftiness and purity, such as meet us in the religion of no other ancient nation.

The law, therefore, opposed and cast out in the name of faith, is brought in again under the shield of love. "If ye love Me," said Jesus, "*keep my commandments.*" Love reconciles law and faith. Law by itself can but prohibit this and that injury to one's neighbour, when they are likely to arise. Love excludes the doing of any injury; it "worketh no ill to its neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10). That which law restrains or condemns after the fact, love renders impossible beforehand. It is not content with

the negative prevention of wrong; it "overcomes" and displaces "evil with good."

"What law could not do," with all its multiplied enactments and redoubled threats, faith "working by love" has accomplished at a stroke. "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 3, 4). Gentile Christians have been raised to the level of a righteousness "exceeding that of scribes and pharisees" (Matt. v. 20). The flesh which defied law's terrors and evaded its control, is subdued by the love of Christ. Law created the need of salvation; it defined its conditions and the direction which it must take. But there its power ceased. It could not change the sinful heart. It supplied no motive adequate to secure obedience. The moralist errs in substituting duty for love, works for faith. He would make the rule furnish the motive, the path supply strength to walk in it. The distinction of the gospel is that it is "*the power* of God unto salvation," while the law is "*weak* through the flesh."

Paul does not therefore override the law in the interest of faith. Quite the contrary, he establishes, he magnifies it. His theology rests on the idea of Righteousness, which is strictly a legal conception. But he puts the law in its proper place. He secures for it the alliance of love. The legalist, desiring to to exalt law, in reality stultifies it. Striving to make it omnipotent, he makes it impotent. In the Apostle's teaching, law is the rule, faith the spring of action. Law marks the path, love gives the will and power to follow it. Who then are the truest friends of law—Legalists or Paulinists, moralists or evangelicals?

III. Alas, the Galatians at the present moment afford

a spectacle far different from the ideal which Paul has drawn. Instead of "serving each other in love," they are "biting and devouring one another." The Church is in danger of being "consumed" by their jealousies and quarrels (ver. 15).

These Asiatic Gauls were men of a warm temperament, quick to resent wrong and prone to imagine it. The dissensions excited by the Judaic controversy had excited their combative temper to an unusual degree. "Biting" describes the wounding and exasperating effect of the manner in which their contentions were carried on; "devour" warns them of its destructiveness. Taunts were hurled across the field of debate; vituperation supplied the lack of argument. Differences of opinion engendered private feuds and rankling injuries. In Corinth the spirit of discord had taken a factious form. It arrayed men in conflicting parties, with their distinctive watchwords and badges and sectional platforms. In these Churches it bore fruit in personal affronts and quarrels, in an angry, vindictive temper, which spread through the Galatian societies and broke out in every possible form of contention (v. 20). If this state of things continued, the Churches of Galatia would cease to exist. Their liberty would end in complete disintegration.

Like some other communities, the Galatian Christians were oscillating between despotism and anarchy; they had not attained the equilibrium of a sober, ordered liberty, the freedom of a manly self-control. They had not sufficient respect either for their own or for each other's rights. Some men must be bridled or they will "bite;" they must wear the yoke or they run wild. They are incapable of being a law unto themselves. They have not faith enough to make them steadfast,

nor love enough to be an inward guide, nor the Spirit of God in measure sufficient to overcome the vanity and self-indulgence of the flesh. But the Apostle still hopes to see his Galatian disciples worthy of their calling as sons of God. He points out to them the narrow but sure path that leads between the desert of legalism on the one hand, and the gulf of anarchy and licence on the other.

The problem of the nature and conditions of Christian liberty occupies the Apostle's mind in different ways in all the letters of this period. The young Churches of the Gentiles were in the gravest peril. They had come out of Egypt to enter the Promised Land, the heritage of the sons of God. The Judaists sought to turn them aside into the Sinaitic wilderness of Mosaism; while their old habits and associations powerfully tended to draw them back into heathen immorality. Legalism and licence were the Scylla and Charybdis on either hand, between which it needed the most firm and skilful pilotage to steer the bark of the Church. The helm of the vessel is in Paul's hands. And, through the grace of God, he did not fail in his task. It is in *the love of Christ* that the Apostle found his guiding light. "Love," he has written, "never faileth."

Love is the handmaid of faith, and the firstborn fruit of the Spirit of Christ (vv. 6, 22). Blending with the law, love refashions it, changing it into its own image. Thus moulded and transfigured, law is no longer an exterior yoke, a system of restraint and penalty; it becomes an inner, sweet constraint. Upon the child of God it acts as an organic and formative energy, the principle of his regenerated being, which charges with its renovating influence all the springs of life. Evil

is met no longer by a merely outward opposition, but by a repugnance proceeding from within. "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh" (v. 17). The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus becomes the law of the man's new nature. God known and loved in Christ is the central object of his life. Within the Divine kingdom so created, the realm of love and of the Spirit, the soul henceforth dwells; and under that kingdom it places for itself all other souls, loved like itself in Christ.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRIST'S SPIRIT AND HUMAN FLESH.

[*He showeth the battell of the flesh and the Spirit; and the fruits of them both.* Heading in Genevan Bible.]

"But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. . . . And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not be vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another."—GAL. v. 16—26.

LOVE is the guard of Christian freedom. The Holy Spirit is its guide. These principles accomplish what the law could never do. It withheld liberty, and yet did not give purity. The Spirit of love and of sonship bestows both, establishing a happy, ordered freedom, the liberty of the sons of God.

From the first of these two factors of Christian ethics the Apostle passes in ver. 16 to the second. He conducts us from the consequence to the cause, from the human aspect of spiritual freedom to the Divine. Love, he has said, fulfils all laws in one. It casts out evil from the heart; it stays the injurious hand and tongue; and makes it impossible for liberty to give the rein to any wanton or selfish impulse. But the law of love is no natural, automatic impulse. It is a Divine inspira-

tion. "Love is of God." It is the characteristic "fruit of the Spirit" of adoption (ver. 22), implanted and nourished from above. When I bid you "by love serve each other," the Apostle says, I do not expect you to keep this law of yourselves, by force of native goodness: I know how contrary it is to your Galatic nature; "but I say, walk in the Spirit," and this will be an easy yoke; to "fulfil the desire of the flesh" will then be for you a thing impossible.

The word *Spirit* (πνεύματι) is written indefinitely; but the Galatians knew well what Spirit the Apostle meant. It is "the Spirit" of whom he has spoken so often in this letter, the Holy Spirit of God, who had entered their hearts when they first believed in Christ and taught them to call God Father. He gave them their freedom: He will teach them how to use it. The absence of the definite article in *Pneuma* does not destroy its personal force, but allows it at the same time a broad, qualitative import, corresponding to that of the opposed "desire of the flesh." The walk governed "by the Spirit" is a *spiritual* walk. As for the interpretation of the *dative* case (rendered variously *by*, or *in*, or even *for the Spirit*), that is determined by the meaning of the noun itself. "The Spirit" is not the path "in" which one walks; rather He supplies *the motive principle, the directing influence* of the new life.* Ver. 16 is interpreted by vv. 18 and 25. To "walk in the Spirit" is to be "led by the Spirit"; it is so to "live in the Spirit" that one habitually "moves" (*marches:* ver. 25) under His direction.

This conception of the indwelling Spirit of God as the actuating power of the Christian's moral life pre-

* The construction of ch. vi. 16; Rom. iv. 12; Phil. iii. 16, is not strictly analogous.

dominates in the rest of this chapter. We shall pursue the general line of the Apostle's teaching on the subject in the present Chapter, leaving for future exposition the detailed enumeration of the "fruit of the Spirit" and "works of the flesh" contained in vv. 19—23. This antithesis of Flesh and Spirit presents the following considerations:—(1) *the diametrical opposition of the two forces;* (2) *the effect of the predominance of one or the other;* (3) *the mastery over the flesh which belongs to those who are Christ's.* In a word, Christ's Spirit is the absolute antagonist and the sure vanquisher of our sinful human flesh.

I. "I say, Walk by the Spirit, and you will verily not fulfil the lust of the flesh." On what ground does this bold assurance rest? Because, the Apostle replies, *the Spirit and the flesh are opposites* (ver. 17). Each is bent on destroying the ascendency of the other. Their cravings and tendencies stand opposed at every point. Where the former rules, the latter must succumb. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."

The verb *lust* in Greek, as in English, bears commonly an evil sense; but not necessarily so, nor by derivation. It is a sad proof of human corruption that in all languages words denoting strong desire tend to an impure significance. Paul extends to "the desire of the Spirit" the term which has just been used of "the lust of the flesh," in this way sharpening the antithesis.* Words appropriated to the vocabulary of the flesh and degraded by its use, may be turned sometimes to good account and employed in the service of

* Comp. Jas. iv. 5: "The Spirit which He made to dwell in us, yearneth even unto jealous envy" (*R. V. margin*); also the double use of ζηλόω in ch. iv. 17, 18 (Chapter XVIII, pp. 279, 280.).

the Holy Spirit, whose influence redeems our speech and purges the uncleanness of our lips.

The opposition here affirmed exists on the widest scale. All history is a battlefield for the struggle between God's Spirit and man's rebellious flesh. In the soul of a half-sanctified Christian, and in Churches like those of Corinth and Galatia whose members are "yet carnal and walk as men," the conflict is patent. The Spirit of Christ has established His rule in the heart; but His supremacy is challenged by the insurrection of the carnal powers. The contest thus revived in the soul of the Christian is internecine; it is that of the kingdoms of light and darkness, of the opposite poles of good and evil. It is an incident in the war of human sin against the Holy Spirit of God, which extends over all time and all human life. Every lust, every act or thought of evil is directed, knowingly or unknowingly, against the authority of the Holy Spirit, against the presence and the rights of God immanent in the creature. Nor is there any restraint upon evil, any influence counteracting it in man or nation or race, which does not proceed from the Spirit of the Lord. The spirit of man has never been without a Divine Paraclete. "God hath not left Himself without witness" to any; and "it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." The Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of all truth and holiness. In the "truth as it is in Jesus" He possesses His highest instrument. But from the beginning it was His office to be God's Advocate, to uphold law, to convict the conscience, to inspire the hope of mercy, to impart moral strength and freedom. We "believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life."

This war of Spirit and Flesh is first ostensibly

declared in the words of Gen. vi. 3. This passage indicates the moral reaction of God's Spirit against the world's corruption, and the protest which in the darkest periods of human depravity He has maintained. God had allowed men to do despite to His good Spirit. But it cannot always be so. A time comes when, outraged and defied, He withdraws His influence from men and from communities; and the Flesh bears them along to swift destruction. So it was in the world before the Flood. So largely amongst later heathen peoples, when God "suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." Even the Mosaic law had proved rather a substitute than a medium for the free action of the Spirit of God on men. "The law was spiritual," but "weak through the flesh." It denounced the guilt which it was powerless to avert.

With the advent of Christ all this is changed. The Spirit of God is now, for the first time, sent forth in His proper character and His full energy. At last His victory draws near. He comes as the Spirit of Christ and the Father, "*poured out* upon all flesh." "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will put My Spirit within you" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27): this was the great hope of prophecy; and it is realised. The Spirit of God's Son regenerates the human heart, subdues the flesh, and establishes the communion of God with men. The reign of the Spirit on earth was the immediate purpose of the manifestation of Jesus Christ.

But what does Paul really mean by "the flesh?" It includes everything that is not "of the Spirit." It signifies the entire potency of sin. It is the contra-spiritual, the undivine in man. Its "works," as we find in vv. 20, 21, are not bodily vices only, but

include every form of moral debasement and aberration. *Flesh* in the Apostle's vocabulary follows the term *spirit*, and deepens and enlarges its meaning precisely as the latter does. Where *spirit* denotes the supersensible in man, *flesh* is the sensible, the bodily nature as such. When *spirit* rises into the supernatural and superhuman, *flesh* becomes the natural, the human by consequence. When *spirit* receives its highest signification, denoting the holy Effluence of God, His personal presence in the world, *flesh* sinks to its lowest and represents unrenewed nature, the evil principle oppugnant and alien to God. It is identical with *sin*. But in this profound moral significance the term is more than a figure. Under its use *the body* is marked out, not indeed as the cause, but as the instrument, the vehicle of sin. Sin has incorporated itself with our organic life, and extends its empire over the material world. When the Apostle speaks of "the body of sin" and "of death," and bids us "mortify the deeds of the body" and "the members which are upon the earth," * his expressions are not to be resolved into metaphors.

On this definition of the terms, it is manifest that the antagonism of the Flesh and Spirit is fundamental. They can never come to terms with each other, nor dwell permanently in the same being. Sin must be extirpated, or the Holy Spirit will finally depart. The struggle must come to a definitive issue. Human character tends every day to a more determinate form; and an hour comes in each case when the victory of flesh or spirit is irrevocably fixed, when "the filthy" will henceforth "be filthy still," and "the holy, holy still" (Rev. xxii. 11).

* See Rom. vi. 6, 12; vii. 4, 5, 23, 24; viii. 10—13; Col. ii. 11—13; iii. 5.

The last clause of ver. 17, "that ye may not do the things that ye would," has been variously interpreted. The rendering of the Authorized Version ("so that ye *cannot*") is perilously misleading. Is it that the flesh prevents the Galatians doing the good they would? Or is the Spirit to prevent them doing the evil they otherwise would? Or are both these oppositions in existence at once, so that they waver between good and evil, leading a partly spiritual, partly carnal life, consistent neither in right nor wrong? The last is the actual state of the case. Paul is perplexed about them (ch. iv. 20); they are in doubt about themselves. They did not "walk in the Spirit," they were not true to their Christian principles; the flesh was too strong for that. Nor would they break away from Christ and follow the bent of their lower nature; the Holy Spirit held them back from doing this. So they have two wills,—or practically none. This state of things was designed by God,—"*in order that* ye may not do the things ye haply would;" it accords with the methods of His government. Irresolution is the necessary effect of the course the Galatians had pursued. So far they stopped short of apostasy; and this restraint witnessed to the power of the Holy Spirit still at work in their midst (ch. iii. 5; vi. 1). Let this Divine hand cease to check them, and the flesh would carry them, with the full momentum of their will, to spiritual ruin. Their condition is just now one of suspense. They are poised in a kind of moral equilibrium, which cannot continue long, but in which, while it lasts, the action of the conflicting forces of Flesh and Spirit is strikingly manifest.

II. These two principles in their development lead to entirely opposite results.

(1) *The works of the flesh*—"manifest" alas, both then and now—*exclude from the kingdom of God.* "I tell you beforehand," the Apostle writes, "as I have already told you: they who practise such things will not inherit God's kingdom" (v. 21).

This warning is essential to Paul's gospel (Rom. ii. 16); it is good news for a world where wrong so often and so insultingly triumphs, that there is a judgement to come. Whatever may be our own lot in the great award, we rejoice to believe that there will be a righteous settlement of human affairs, complete and final; and that this settlement is in the hands of Jesus Christ. In view of His tribunal the Apostle goes about "*warning* and teaching every man." And this is his constant note, amongst profligate heathen, or hypocritical Jews, or backsliding and antinomian Christians,—"The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." For that kingdom is, above all, *righteousness.* Men of fleshly minds, in the nature of things, have no place in it. They are blind to its light, dead to its influence, at war with its aims and principles. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—and walk in darkness, *we lie*" (1 John i. 6). "Those who do such things" forfeit by doing them the character of sons of God. His children seek to be "perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect." They are "blameless and harmless, imitators of God, walking in love as Christ loved us" (Phil. ii. 15; Eph. v. 1, 2). The Spirit of God's Son is a spirit of love and peace, of temperance and gentleness (v. 22). If these fruits are wanting, the Spirit of Christ is not in us and we are none of His. We are without the one thing by which He said all men would know His disciples (John xiii. 35). When the Galatians "bite and devour one

another," they resemble Ishmael the persecutor (ch. iv. 29), rather than the gentle Isaac, heir of the Covenant.

"If children, *then heirs*." Future destiny turns upon present character. The Spirit of God's Son, with His fruit of love and peace, is "the earnest of our inheritance, sealing us against the day of redemption" (Eph. i. 14; iv. 30). By selfish tempers and fleshly indulgences He is driven from the soul; and losing Him, it is shut out from the kingdom of grace on earth, and from the glory of the redeemed. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean;" such is the excommunication written above the gate of the Heavenly City (Rev. xxi. 27). This sentence of the Apocalypse puts a final seal upon the teaching of Scripture. The God of revelation is the Holy One; His Spirit is the Holy Spirit; His kingdom is the kingdom of the saints, whose atmosphere burns like fire against all impurity. Concerning the men of the flesh the Apostle can only say, "Whose end is perdition" (Phil. iii. 19).

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul entreats his readers not to be deceived upon this point (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Eph. v. 5). It seems so obvious, so necessary a principle, that one wonders how it should be mistaken, why he is compelled to reiterate it as he does in this place. And yet this has been a common delusion. No form of religion has escaped being touched by Antinomianism. It is the divorce of piety from morality. It is the disposition to think that ceremonial works on the one hand, or faith on the other, supersede the ethical conditions of harmony with God. Foisting itself on evangelical doctrine this error leads men to assume that salvation is the mere pardon of sin. The sinner appears to imagine he is saved in order to remain a sinner. He treats God's mercy as a kind

of bank, on which he may draw as often as his offences past or future may require. He does not understand that sanctification is the sequel of justification, that the evidence of a true pardon lies in a changed heart that loathes sin.

(2) Of the opposite principle the Apostle states not the ultimate, but the more immediate consequences. "Led by the Spirit, *ye are not under the law*" (ver. 18); and "Against such things—love, peace, goodness, and the like—*there is no law*" (ver. 23).

The declaration of ver. 18 is made with a certain abruptness. Paul has just said, in ver. 17, that the Spirit is the appointed antagonist *of the flesh.* And now he adds, that if we yield ourselves to His influence we shall be no longer *under the law.* This identification of sin and the law was established in ch. ii. 16—18; iii. 10—22. The law by itself, the Apostle showed, does not overcome sin, but aggravates it; it shuts men up the hopeless prisoners of their own past mis-doing. To be "under law" is to be in the position of Ishmael, the slave-born and finally outcast son, whose nature and temper are of the flesh (ch. iv. 21—31). After all this we can understand his writing *law* for *sin* in this passage, just as in 1 Cor. xv. 56 he calls "the law the *power* of sin." To be under law was, in Paul's view, to be held consciously in the grasp of sin. This was the condition to which Legalism would reduce the Galatians. From this calamity the Spirit of Christ would keep them free.

The phrase "under law" reminds us once more of the imperilled liberty of the Galatians. Their spiritual freedom and their moral safety were assailed in common. In ver. 16 he had said, "Let the Holy Spirit guide you, and you will vanquish sin"; and

now, "By the same guidance you will escape the oppressive yoke of the law." Freedom from sin, freedom from the Jewish law—these two liberties were virtually one. "Sin shall not lord it over you, because ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14). Ver. 23 explains this double freedom. Those who possess the Spirit of Christ bear His moral fruits. Their life fulfils the demands of the law, *without being due to its compulsion.* Law can say nothing against them. It did not produce this fruit; but it is bound to approve it. It has no hold on the men of the Spirit, no charge to bring against them. Its requirements are satisfied; its constraints and threatenings are laid aside.

Law therefore, in its Judaistic sense and application, has been abolished since "faith has come." No longer does it rule the soul by fear and compulsion. This office, necessary once for the infant heirs of the Covenant, it has no right to exercise over spiritual men. Law cannot give life (ch. iii. 21). This is the prerogative of the Spirit of God. Law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" but it never inspired such love in any man's breast. If he does so love, the law approves him, without claiming credit to itself for the fact. If he does not love his God, law condemns him and brands him a transgressor. But "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts *by the Holy Ghost.*" The teaching of this paragraph on the relation of the believer in Christ to God's law is summed up in the words of Rom. viii. 2: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death." Law has become my friend, instead of my enemy and accuser. For God's Spirit fills my soul with the love in which its fulfilment is

contained. And now eternal life is the goal that stands in my view, in place of the death with the prospect of which, as a man of the flesh, the law appalled me.

III. We see then that *deliverance from sin belongs* not to the subjects of the law, but *to the freemen of the Spirit.* This deliverance, promised in ver. 16, is declared in ver. 24 as an accomplished fact. "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. . . . They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts." The tyranny of the flesh is ended for those who are "in Christ Jesus." His cross has slain their sins. The entrance of His Spirit imports the death of all carnal affections.

"They who are Christ's did crucify the flesh." This is the moral application of Paul's mystical doctrine, central to all his theology, of the believer's union with the Redeemer (see Chapter X, pp. 156—160). "Christ in me—I in Him:" there is Paul's secret. He was "one spirit" with Jesus Christ—dying, risen, ascended, reigning, returning in glory. His old self, his old world was dead and gone—slain by Christ's cross, buried in His grave (ch. ii. 20; vi. 14). And the flesh, common to the evil world and the evil self—that above all was crucified. The death of shame and legal penalty, the curse of God had overtaken it in the death of Jesus Christ. Christ has risen, the "Lord of the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18), who "could not be holden" by the death which fell on "the body of His flesh." They who are Christ's rose with Him; while "the flesh of sin" stays in His grave. Faith sees it there, and leaves it there. We "reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and living unto God, in Christ Jesus." For such

men, the flesh that was once—imperious, importunate, law-defying—is no more. It has received its death-stroke. "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and a sacrifice for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh*" (Rom. viii. 3). Sin is smitten with the lightning of His anger. Doom has taken hold of it. Destroyed already in principle, it only waits for men to know this and to understand what has been done, till it shall perish everywhere. The destruction of the sinful flesh—more strictly of "sin in the flesh"—occurred, as Paul understood the matter, virtually and potentially in the moment of Christ's death. It was our human flesh that was crucified in Him—slain on the cross because, though in Him not personally sinful, yet in us with whom He had made Himself one, it was steeped in sin. Our sinful flesh hung upon His cross; it has risen, cleansed and sanctified, from His grave.

What was then accomplished in principle when "One died for all," is realised in point of fact when we are "baptized into His death"—when, that is to say, faith makes His death ours and its virtue passes into the soul. The scene of the cross is inwardly rehearsed. The wounds which pierced the Redeemer's flesh and spirit now pierce our consciences. It is a veritable crucifixion through which the soul enters into communion with its risen Saviour, and learns to live His life. Nor is its sanctification complete till it is "conformed unto His death" (Phil. iii. 10). So with all his train of "passions and of lusts," the "old man" is fastened and nailed down upon the new, interior Calvary, set up in each penitent and believing heart. The flesh may still, as in these Galatians, give mournful evidence of life. But it has no right to exist a single

hour. *De jure* it is dead—dead in the reckoning of faith. It may die a lingering, protracted death, and make convulsive struggles; but die it must in all who are of Christ Jesus.

Let the Galatians consider what their calling of God signified. Let them recall the prospects which opened before them in the days of their first faith in Christ, the love that glowed in their hearts, the energy with which the Holy Spirit wrought upon their nature. Let them know how truly they were called to liberty, and in good earnest were made sons of God. They have only to continue as heretofore to be led by the Spirit of Christ and to march forward along the path on which they had entered, and neither Jewish law nor their own lawless flesh will be able to bring them into bondage. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Where He is not, there is legalism, or licence; or, it may be, both at once.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they which practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."—GAL. v. 19—21.

THE tree is known by its fruits: the flesh by its "works." And these works are "manifest." The field of the world—"this present evil world" (ch. i. 4)—exhibits them in rank abundance. Perhaps at no time was the civilised world so depraved and godless as in the first century of the Christian era, when Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian, wore the imperial purple and posed as masters of the earth. It was the cruelty and vileness of the times which culminated in these deified monsters. By no accident was mankind cursed at this epoch with such a race of rulers. The world that worshipped them was worthy of them. Vice appeared in its most revolting and abandoned forms. Wickedness was rampant and triumphant. The age of the early Roman Empire has left a foul mark in human history and literature. Let Tacitus and Juvenal speak for it.

Paul's enumeration of the current vices in this passage has however a character of its own. It differs

from the descriptions drawn by the same hand in other Epistles; and this difference is due doubtless to the character of his readers. Their temperament was sanguine; their disposition frank and impulsive. Sins of lying and injustice, conspicuous in other lists, are not found in this. From these vices the Galatic nature was comparatively free. Sensual sins and sins of passion—*unchastity, vindictiveness, intemperance*—occupy the field. To these must be added *idolatry*, common to the Pagan world. Gentile idolatry was allied with the practice of impurity on the one side; and on the other, through the evil of "sorcery," with "enmities" and "jealousies. So that these works of the flesh belong to four distinct types of depravity; three of which come under the head of immorality, while the fourth is the universal principle of Pagan irreligion, being in turn both cause and effect of the moral debasement connected with it.

I. "The works of the flesh are these—*fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.*" A dark beginning! Sins of impurity find a place in every picture of Gentile morals given by the Apostle. In whatever direction he writes—to Romans or Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, or Thessalonians—it is always necessary to warn against these evils. They are equally "manifest" in heathen literature. The extent to which they stain the pages of the Greek and Roman classics sets a heavy discount against their value as instruments of Christian education. Civilised society in Paul's day was steeped in sexual corruption.

Fornication was practically universal. Few were found, even among severe moralists, to condemn it. The overthrow of the splendid classical civilisation, due to the extinction of manly virtues in the dominant race,

may be traced largely to this cause. Brave men are the sons of pure women. John in the Apocalypse has written on the brow of Rome, "the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," this legend: "*Babylon the great, mother of harlots*" (Rev. xvii. 5). Whatever symbolic meaning the saying has, in its literal sense it was terribly true. Our modern Babylons, unless they purge themselves, may earn the same title and the same doom.

In writing to Corinth, the metropolis of Greek licentiousness, Paul deals very solemnly and explicitly with this vice. He teaches that this sin, above others, is committed "against the man's own body." It is a prostitution of the physical nature which Jesus Christ wore and still wears, which He claims for the temple of His Spirit, and will raise from the dead to share His immortality. Impurity degrades the body, and it affronts in an especial degree "the Holy Spirit which we have from God." Therefore it stands first amongst these "works of the flesh" in which it shows itself hostile and repugnant to the Spirit of our Divine sonship. "Joined to the harlot" in "one body," the vile offender gives himself over in compact and communion to the dominion of the flesh, as truly as he who is "joined to the Lord" is "one spirit with Him" (1 Cor. vi. 13—20).

On this subject it is difficult to speak faithfully and yet directly. There are many happily in our sheltered Christian homes who scarcely know of the existence of this heathenish vice, except as it is named in Scripture. To them it is an evil of the past, a nameless thing of darkness. And it is well it should be so. Knowledge of its horrors may be suitable for seasoned social reformers, and necessary to the publicist who must under-

stand the worst as well as the best of the world he has to serve; but common decency forbids its being put within the reach of boys and innocent maidens. Newspapers and novels which reek of the divorce-court and trade in the garbage of human life, in "things of which it is a shame even to speak," are no more fit for ordinary consumption than the air of the pest-house is for breathing. They are sheer poison to the young imagination, which should be fed on whatsoever things are honourable and pure and lovely. But bodily self-respect must be learned in good time. Modesty of feeling and chastity of speech must adorn our youth. "Let marriage be honourable in the eyes of all," let the old chivalrous sentiments of reverence and gentleness towards women be renewed in our sons, and our country's future is safe. Perhaps in our revolt from Mariolatry we Protestants have too much forgotten the honour paid by Jesus to the Virgin Mother, and the sacredness which His birth has conferred on motherhood. "Blessed," said the heavenly voice, "art thou among women." All our sisters are blessed and dignified in her, the holy "mother of our Lord" (Luke i. 42, 43).*

Wherever, and in whatever form, the offence exists which violates this relationship, Paul's fiery interdict is ready to be launched upon it. The anger of Jesus burned against this sin. In the wanton look He discerns the crime of adultery, which in the Mosaic law was punished with death by stoning. "The Lord is an avenger in all these things"—in everything that touches the honour of the human person and the sanc-

* Comp., 1 Tim. ii. 13—15: *saved through the childbearing—i.e.*, surely, the bearing of the Child Jesus, *the seed of the woman.*

tity of wedded life (1 Thess. iv. 1—8). The interests that abet whoredom should find in the Church of Jesus Christ an organization pledged to relentless war against them. The man known to practise this wickedness is an enemy of Christ and of his race. He should be shunned as we would shun a notorious liar—or a fallen woman. Paul's rule is explicit, and binding on all Christians, concerning "the fornicator, the drunkard, the extortioner—with such a one no, not to eat" (1 Cor. v. 9—11). That Church little deserves the name of a Church of Christ, which has not means of discipline sufficient to fence its communion from the polluting presence of "such a one."

Uncleanness and *lasciviousness* are companions of the more specific impurity. The former is the general quality of this class of evils, and includes whatever is contaminating in word or look, in gesture or in dress, in thought or sentiment. "Lasciviousness" is uncleanness open and shameless. The filthy jest, the ogling glance, the debauched and sensual face, these tell their own tale; they speak of a soul that has rolled in corruption till respect for virtue has died out of it. In this direction "the works of the flesh" can go no further. A lascivious human creature is loathsomeness itself. To see it is like looking through a door into hell.

A leading critic of our own times has, under this word of Paul's, put his finger upon the plague-spot in the national life of our Gallic neighbours—*Aselgeia*, or Wantonness. There may be a certain truth in this charge. Their disposition in several respects resembles that of Paul's Galatians. But we can scarcely afford to reproach others on this score. English society is none too clean. *Home* is for our people everywhere, thank

God, the nursery of innocence. But outside its shelter, and beyond the reach of the mother's voice, how many perils await the weak and unwary. In the night-streets of the city the "strange woman" spreads her net, "whose feet go down to death." In workshops and business-offices too often coarse and vile language goes on unchecked, and one unchaste mind will infect a whole circle. Schools, wanting in moral discipline, may become seminaries of impurity. There are crowded quarters in large towns, and wretched tenements in many a country village, where the conditions of life are such that decency is impossible; and a soil is prepared in which sexual sin grows rankly. To cleanse these channels of social life is indeed a task of Hercules; but the Church of Christ is loudly called to it. Her vocation is in itself a purity crusade, a war declared against "all filthiness of flesh and spirit."

II. Next to *lust* in this procession of the Vices comes *idolatry*. In Paganism they were associated by many ties. Some of the most renowned and popular cults of the day were open purveyors of sensuality and lent to it the sanctions of religion. Idolatry is found here in fit company (comp. 1 Cor. x. 6—8). Peter's First Epistle, addressed to the Galatian with other Asiatic Churches, speaks of "the desire of the Gentiles" as consisting in "lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and *abominable idolatries*" (ch. iv. 3).

Idolatry forms the centre of the awful picture of Gentile depravity drawn by our Apostle in his letter to Rome (ch. i.). It is, as he there shows, the outcome of man's native antipathy to the knowledge of God. Willingly men "took lies in the place of truth, and served the creature rather than the Creator." They merged God in nature, debasing the spiritual conception of the

Deity with fleshly attributes. This blending of God with the world gave rise, amongst the mass of mankind, to Polytheism; while in the minds of the more reflective it assumed a Pantheistic shape. The manifold of nature, absorbing the Divine, broke it up into "gods many and lords many"—gods of the earth and sky and ocean, gods and goddesses of war, of tillage, of love, of art, of statecraft and handicraft, patrons of human vices and follies as well as of excellencies, changing with every climate and with the varying moods and conditions of their worshippers. No longer did it appear that God made man in His image; now men made gods in "the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of winged and four-footed and creeping things."

When at last under the Roman Empire the different Pagan races blended their customs and faiths, and "the Orontes flowed into the Tiber," there came about a perfect chaos of religions. Gods Greek and Roman, Phrygian, Syrian, Egyptian jostled each other in the great cities—a *colluvies deorum* more bewildering even than the *colluvies gentium*,—each cultus striving to outdo the rest in extravagance and licence. The system of classic Paganism was reduced to impotence. The false gods destroyed each other. The mixture of heathen religions, none of them pure, produced complete demoralisation.

The Jewish monotheism remained, the one rock of human faith in the midst of this dissolution of the old nature-creeds. Its conception of the Godhead was not so much metaphysical as ethical. "Hear O Israel," says every Jew to his fellows, "the Lord our God is one Lord." But that "one Lord" was also "*the Holy One* of Israel." Let his holiness be sullied, let the thought of the Divine ethical transcendence suffer

eclipse, and He sinks back again into the manifold of nature. Till God was manifest in the flesh through the sinless Christ, it was impossible to conceive of a perfect purity allied to the natural. To the mind of the Israelite, God's holiness was one with the *aloneness* in which he held Himself sublimely aloof from all material forms, one with the pure spirituality of His being. "There is none holy save the Lord; neither is there any rock like our God:" such was his lofty creed. On this ground prophecy carried on its inspired struggle against the tremendous forces of naturalism. When at length the victory of spiritual religion was gained in Israel, unbelief assumed another form; the knowledge of the Divine unity hardened into a sterile and fanatic legalism, into the idolatry of dogma and tradition; and Scribe and Pharisee took the place of Prophet and of Psalmist.

The idolatry and immorality of the Gentile world had a common root. God's anger, the Apostle declared, blazed forth equally against both (Rom. i. 18). The monstrous forms of uncleanness then prevalent were a fitting punishment, an inevitable consequence of heathen impiety. They marked the lowest level to which human nature can fall in its apostasy from God. Self-respect in man is ultimately based on reverence for the Divine. Disowning his Maker, he degrades himself. Bent on evil, he must banish from his soul that warning, protesting image of the Supreme Holiness in which he was created.

> "He tempts his reason to deny
> God whom his passions dare defy."

"They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." "They loved darkness rather than light, because their

deeds were evil." These are terrible accusations. But the history of natural religion confirms their truth.

Sorcery is the attendant of idolatry. A low, naturalistic conception of the Divine lends itself to immoral purposes. Men try to operate upon it by material causes, and to make it a partner in evil. Such is the origin of magic. Natural objects deemed to possess supernatural attributes, as the stars and the flight of birds, have divine omens ascribed to them. Drugs of occult power, and things grotesque or curious made mysterious by the fancy, are credited with influence over the Nature-gods. From the use of drugs in incantations and exorcisms the word *pharmakeia*, here denoting *sorcery*, took its meaning. The science of chemistry has destroyed a world of magic connected with the virtues of herbs. These superstitions formed a chief branch of sorcery and witchcraft, and have flourished under many forms of idolatry. And the magical arts were common instruments of malice. The sorcerer's charms were in requisition, as in the case of Balaam, to curse one's enemies, to weave some spell that should involve them in destruction. Accordingly *sorcery* finds its place there between *idolatry* and *enmities.*

III. On this latter head the Apostle enlarges with edifying amplitude. *Enmities, strife, jealousies, ragings, factions, divisions, parties, envyings*—what a list! Eight out of fifteen of "the works of the flesh manifest" to Paul in writing to Galatia belong to this one category. The Celt all over the world is known for a hot-tempered fellow. He has high capabilities; he is generous, enthusiastic, and impressionable. Meanness and treachery are foreign to his nature. But he is *irritable.* And it is in a vain and irritable disposition

that these vices are engendered. Strife and division have been proverbial in the history of the Gallic nations. Their jealous temper has too often neutralised their engaging qualities; and their quickness and cleverness have for this reason availed them but little in competition with more phlegmatic races. In Highland clans, in Irish septs, in French wars and Revolutions the same moral features reappear which are found in this delineation of Galatic life. This persistence of character in the races of mankind is one of the most impressive facts of history.

"Enmities" are private hatreds or family feuds, which break out openly in "strife." This is seen in Church affairs, when men take opposite sides not so much from any decided difference of judgement, as from personal dislike and the disposition to thwart an opponent. "Jealousies" and "wraths" (or "rages") are passions attending enmity and strife. There is *jealousy* where one's antagonist is a rival, whose success is felt as a wrong to oneself. This may be a silent passion, repressed by pride but consuming the mind inwardly. *Rage* is the open eruption of anger which, when powerless to inflict injury, will find vent in furious language and menacing gestures. There are natures in which these tempests of rage take a perfectly demonic form. The face grows livid, the limbs move convulsively, the nervous organism is seized by a storm of frenzy; and until it has passed, the man is literally beside himself. Such exhibitions are truly appalling. They are "works of the flesh" in which, yielding to its own ungoverned impulse, it gives itself up to be possessed by Satan and is "set on fire of hell."

Factions, divisions, parties are words synonymous. "Divisions" is the more neutral term, and represents

the state into which a community is thrown by the working of the spirit of strife. "Factions" imply more of self-interest and policy in those concerned; "parties" are due rather to self-will and opinionativeness. The Greek word employed in this last instance, as in 1 Cor. xi. 19, has become our *heresies*. It does not imply of necessity any doctrinal difference as the ground of the party distinctions in question. At the same time, this expression is an advance on those foregoing, pointing to such divisions as have grown, or threaten to grow into "distinct and organized parties" (Lightfoot).

Envyings (or *grudges*) complete this bitter series. This term might have found a place beside "enmities" and "strife." Standing where it does, it seems to denote the rankling anger, the persistent ill-will caused by party-feuds. The Galatian quarrels left behind them grudges and resentments which became inveterate. These "envyings," the fruit of old contentions, were in turn the seed of new strife. Settled rancour is the last and worst form of contentiousness. It is so much more culpable than "jealousy" or "rage," as it has not the excuse of personal conflict; and it does not subside, as the fiercest outburst of passion may, leaving room for forgiveness. It nurses its revenge, waiting, like Shylock, for the time when it shall "feed fat its ancient grudge."

"Where jealousy and faction are, there," says James, "is confusion and every vile deed." This was the state of things to which the Galatian societies were tending. The Judaizers had sown the seeds of discord, and it had fallen on congenial soil. Paul has already invoked Christ's law of love to exorcise this spirit of destruction (vv. 13—15). He tells the Galatians that their vainglorious and provoking attitude towards each

other and their envious disposition are entirely contrary to the life in the Spirit which they professed to lead (vv. 25, 26), and fatal to the existence of the Church. These were the "passions of the flesh" which most of all they needed to crucify.

IV. Finally, we come to sins of intemperance—*drunkenness, revellings, and the like.*

These are the vices of a barbarous people. Our Teutonic and Celtic forefathers were alike prone to this kind of excess. Peter warns the Galatians against "wine-bibbings, revellings, carousings." The passion for strong drink, along with "lasciviousness" and "lusts" on the one hand, and "abominable idolatries" on the other, had in Asia Minor swelled into a "cataclysm of riot," overwhelming the Gentile world (1 Pet. iv. 3, 4). The Greeks were a comparatively sober people. The Romans were more notorious for gluttony than for hard drinking. The practice of seeking pleasure in intoxication is a remnant of savagery, which exists to a shameful extent in our own country. It appears to have been prevalent with the Galatians, whose ancestors a few generations back were northern barbarians.

A strong and raw animal nature is in itself a temptation to this vice. For men exposed to cold and hardship, the intoxicating cup has a potent fascination. The flesh, buffeted by the fatigues of a rough day's work, finds a strange zest in its treacherous delights. The man "drinks and forgets his poverty, and remembers his misery no more." For the hour, while the spell is upon him, he is a king; he lives under another sun; the world's wealth is his. He wakes up to find himself a sot! With racked head and unstrung frame he returns to the toil and squalor of his life, adding new

wretchedness to that he had striven to forget. Anon he says, "I will seek it yet again!" When the craving has once mastered him, its indulgence becomes his only pleasure. Such men deserve our deepest pity. They need for their salvation all the safeguards that Christian sympathy and wisdom can throw around them.

There are others "given to much wine," for whom one feels less compassion. Their convivial indulgences are a part of their general habits of luxury and sensuality, an open, flagrant triumph of the flesh over the Spirit. These sinners require stern rebuke and warning. They must understand that "those who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," that "he who soweth to his own flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." Of these and their like it was that Jesus said, "Woe unto you that laugh now; for ye shall mourn and weep."

Our British Churches at the present time are more alive to this than perhaps to any other social evil. They are setting themselves sternly against drunkenness, and none too soon. Of all the works of the flesh this has been, if not the most potent, certainly the most conspicuous in the havoc it has wrought amongst us. Its ruinous effects are "manifest" in every prison and asylum, and in the private history of innumerable families in every station of life. Who is there that has not lost a kinsman, a friend, or at least a neighbour or acquaintance, whose life was wrecked by this accursed passion? Much has been done, and is doing, to check its ravages. But more remains to be accomplished before civil law and public opinion shall furnish all the protection against this evil necessary for a people so tempted by climate and by constitution as our own.

With *fornication* at the beginning and *drunkenness* at the end, Paul's description of "the works of the flesh" is, alas! far indeed from being out of date. The dread procession of the Vices marches on before our eyes. Races and temperaments vary; science has transformed the visible aspect of life; but the ruling appetites of human nature are unchanged, its primitive vices are with us to-day. The complicated problems of modern life, the gigantic evils which confront our social reformers, are simply the primeval corruptions of mankind in a new guise—the old lust and greed and hate. Under his veneer of manners, the civilized European, untouched by the grace of the Holy Spirit of God, is still apt to be found a selfish, cunning, unchaste, revengeful, superstitious creature, distinguished from his barbarian progenitor chiefly by his better dress and more cultivated brain, and his inferior agility. Witness the great Napoleon, a very "god of this world," but in all that gives worth to character no better than a savage!

With Europe turned into one vast camp and its nations groaning audibly under the weight of their armaments, with hordes of degraded women infesting the streets of its cities, with discontent and social hatred smouldering throughout its industrial populations, we have small reason to boast of the triumphs of modern civilisation. Better circumstances do not make better men. James' old question has for our day a terrible pertinence: "Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it on your pleasures."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."—GAL. v. 22, 23.

"THE tree is known by its fruits." Such was the criterion of religious profession laid down by the Founder of Christianity. This test His religion applies in the first instance to itself. It proclaims a final judgement for all men; it submits itself to the present judgement of all men—a judgement resting in each case on the same ground, namely that of *fruit*, of moral issue and effects. For character is the true *summum bonum;* it is the thing which in our secret hearts and in our better moments we all admire and covet. The creed which produces the best and purest character, in the greatest abundance and under the most varied conditions, is that which the world will believe.

These verses contain the ideal of character furnished by the gospel of Christ. Here is the religion of Jesus put in practice. These are the sentiments and habits, the views of duty, the temper of mind, which faith in Jesus Christ tends to form. Paul's conception of the ideal human life at once "commends itself to every man's conscience." And he owed it to the gospel of Christ. His ethics are the fruit of his dogmatic faith. What other system of belief has produced a like result,

or has formed in men's minds ideas of duty so reasonable and gracious, so just, so balanced and perfect, and above all so practicable, as those inculcated in the Apostle's teaching?

"Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." Thoughts of this kind, lives of this kind, are not the product of imposture or delusion. The "works" of systems of error are "manifest" in the moral wrecks they leave behind them, strewing the track of history. But the virtues here enumerated are the fruits which the Spirit of Christ has brought forth, and brings forth at this day more abundantly than ever. As a theory of morals, a representation of what is best in conduct, Christian teaching has held for 1800 years an unrivalled place. Christ and His Apostles are still the masters of morality. Few have been bold enough to offer any improvements on the ethics of Jesus; and smaller still has been the acceptance which their proposals have obtained. The new idea of virtue which Christianity has given to the world, the energy it has imparted to the moral will, the immense and beneficial revolutions it has brought about in human society, supply a powerful argument for its divinity. Making every deduction for unfaithful Christians, who dishonour "the worthy name" they bear, still "the fruit of the Spirit" gathered in these eighteen centuries is a glorious witness to the virtue of the tree of life from which it grew.

This picture of the Christian life takes its place side by side with others found in Paul's Epistles. It recalls the figure of Charity in 1 Cor. xiii., acknowledged by moralists of every school to be a master-piece of characterization. It stands in line also with the oft-quoted enumeration of Phil. iv. 8: "Whatsoever things

are true, whatsoever things are reverend, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are chaste, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are kindly spoken, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." These representations do not pretend to theoretical completeness. It would be easy to specify important virtues not mentioned in the Apostle's categories. His descriptions have a practical aim, and press on the attention of his readers the special forms and qualities of virtue demanded from them, under the given circumstances, by their faith in Christ.

It is interesting to compare the Apostle's definitions with Plato's celebrated scheme of the four cardinal virtues. They are *wisdom*, *courage*, *temperance*, with *righteousness* as the union and co-ordination of the other three. The difference between the cast of the Platonic and Pauline ethics is most instructive. In the Apostle's catalogue the first two of the philosophical virtues are wanting; unless "courage" be included, as it properly may, under the name of "virtue" in the Philippian list. With the Greek thinker, *wisdom* is the fundamental excellence of the soul. Knowledge is in his view the supreme desideratum, the guarantee for moral health and social well-being. The philosopher is the perfect man, the proper ruler of the commonwealth. Intellectual culture brings in its train ethical improvement. For "no man is knowingly vicious:" such was the dictum of Socrates, the father of Philosophy. In the ethics of the gospel, *love* becomes the chief of virtues, parent of the rest.

Love and *humility* are the two features whose predominance distinguishes the Christian from the purest classical conceptions of moral worth. The

ethics of Naturalism know love as a passion, a sensuous instinct (ἔρως); or again, as the personal affection which binds friend to friend through common interest or resemblance of taste and disposition (φιλία). Love in its highest sense (ἀγάπη) Christianity has re-discovered, finding in it a universal law for the reason and spirit. It assigns to this principle a like place to that which gravitation holds in the material universe, as the attraction which binds each man to his Maker and to his fellows. Its obligations neutralise self-interest and create a spiritual solidarity of mankind, centring in Christ, the God-man. Pre-Christian philosophy exalted the intellect, but left the heart cold and vacant, and the deeper springs of will untouched. It was reserved for Jesus Christ to teach men how to love, and in love to find the law of freedom.

If love was wanting in natural ethics, *humility* was positively excluded. The pride of philosophy regarded it as a vice rather than a virtue. "Lowliness" is ranked with "pettiness" and "repining" and "despondency" as the product of "littleness of soul." On the contrary, the man of lofty soul is held up to admiration, who is "worthy of great things and deems himself so,"—who is "not given to wonder, for nothing seems great to him,"—who is "ashamed to receive benefits," and "has the appearance indeed of being supercilious" (Aristotle). How far removed is this model from our Example who has said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." The classical idea of virtue is based on the greatness of man; the Christian, on the goodness of God. Before the Divine glory in Jesus Christ the soul of the believer bows in adoration. It is humbled at the throne of grace, chastened into self-forgetting. It gazes on this Image

of love and holiness, till it repeats itself within the heart.

Nine virtues are woven together in this golden chain of the Holy Spirit's fruit. They fall into three groups of three, four, and two respectively—according as they refer primarily to God, *love, joy, peace;* to one's fellow-men, *longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith;* and to oneself, *meekness, temperance.* But the successive qualities are so closely linked and pass into one another with so little distance, that it is undesirable to emphasize the analysis; and while bearing the above distinctions in mind, we shall seek to give to each of the nine graces its separate place in the catalogue.

1. *The fruit of the Spirit is love.* That fitliest first. Love is the Alpha and Omega of the Apostle's thoughts concerning the new life in Christ. This queen of graces is already enthroned within this chapter. In ver. 6 Love came forward to be the minister of Faith; in ver. 14 it reappeared as the ruling principle of Divine law. These two offices of love are united here, where it becomes the prime fruit of the Holy Spirit of God, to whom the heart is opened by the act of faith, and who enables us to keep God's law. Love is "the fulfilling of the law;" for it is the essence of the gospel; it is the spirit of sonship; without this Divine affection, no profession of faith, no practice of good works has any value in the sight of God or intrinsic moral worth. Though I have all other gifts and merits —wanting this, "I am nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 1—3). The cold heart is dead. Whatever appears to be Christian that has not the love of Christ, is an unreality —a matter of orthodox opinion or mechanical performance—dead as the body without the spirit. In all

true goodness there is an element of love. Here then is the fountain-head of Christian virtue, the "well of water springing up into eternal life" which Christ opens in the believing soul, from which flow so many bounteous streams of mercy and good fruits.

This love is, in the first instance and above all, *love to God.* It springs from the knowledge of His love to man. "God is love," and "love is of God" (1 John iv. 7, 8). All love flows from one fountain, from the One Father. And the Father's love is revealed in the Son. Love has the cross for its measure and standard. "He sent the Only-begotten into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love: hereby know we love" (1 John iii. 16; iv. 9, 10). The man who knows this love, whose heart responds to the manifestation of God in Christ, is "born of God." His soul is ready to become the abode of all pure affections, his life the exhibition of all Christ-like virtues. For the love of the Father is revealed to him; and the love of a son is enkindled in his soul by the Spirit of the Son.

In Paul's teaching, love forms the antithesis to *knowledge.* By this opposition the wisdom of God is distinguished from "the wisdom of this world and of its princes, which come to nought" (1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 8; viii. 1, 3). Not that love despises knowledge, or seeks to dispense with it. It requires knowledge beforehand in order to discern its object, and afterwards to understand its work. So the Apostle prays for the Philippians "that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment" (ch. i. 9, 10). It is not *love without knowledge,* heat without light, the warmth of an ignorant, untempered zeal that the Apostle desiderates. But he deplores the existence of *knowledge without love,* a clear head with a cold heart,

an intellect whose growth has left the affections starved and stunted, with enlightened apprehensions of truth that awaken no corresponding emotions. Hence comes the pride of reason, the "knowledge that puffeth up." Love alone knows the art of building up.

Loveless knowledge is not wisdom. For wisdom is lowly in her own eyes, mild and gracious. What the man of cold intellect sees, he sees clearly; he reasons on it well. But his data are defective. He discerns but the half, the poorer half of life. There is a whole heaven of facts of which he takes no account. He has an acute and sensitive perception of phenomena coming within the range of his five senses, and of everything that logic can elicit from such phenomena. But he "cannot see afar off." Above all, "he that loveth not, *knoweth not God*." He leaves out the Supreme Factor in human life; and all his calculations are vitiated. "Hath not *God* made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

If knowledge then is the enlightened eye, love is the throbbing, living heart of Christian goodness.

2. *The fruit of the Spirit is joy.* Joy dwells in the house of Love; nor elsewhere will she tarry.

Love is the mistress both of joy and sorrow. Wronged, frustrated, hers is the bitterest of griefs. Love makes us capable of pain and shame; but equally of triumph and delight. Therefore the Lover of mankind was the "Man of sorrows," whose love bared its breast to the arrows of scorn and hate; and yet "for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame." There was no sorrow like that of Christ rejected and crucified; no joy like the joy of Christ risen and reigning. This joy, the delight of love satisfied in those it loves, is that whose fulfilment He has promised to His disciples (John xv. 8—11).

Such joy the selfish heart never knows. Life's choicest blessings, heaven's highest favours fail to bring it happiness. Sensuous gratification, and even intellectual pleasure by itself wants the true note of gladness. There is nothing that thrills the whole nature, that stirs the pulses of life and sets them dancing, like the touch of a pure love. It is the pearl of great price, for which "if a man would give all the substance of his house, he would be utterly contemned." But of all the joys love gives to life, that is the deepest which is ours when "the love of God is shed abroad in our heart." Then the full tide of blessedness pours into the human spirit. Then we know of what happiness our nature was made capable, when we know the love that God hath toward us.

This joy in the Lord quickens and elevates, while it cleanses, all other emotions. It raises the whole temperature of the heart. It gives a new glow to life. It lends a warmer and a purer tone to our natural affections. It sheds a diviner meaning, a brighter aspect over the common face of earth and sky. It throws a radiance of hope upon the toils and weariness of mortality. It "glories in tribulation." It triumphs in death. He who "lives in the Spirit" cannot be a dull, or peevish, or melancholy man. One with Christ his heavenly Lord, he begins already to taste His joy, —a joy which none taketh away and which many sorrows cannot quench.

Joy is the beaming countenance, the elastic step, the singing voice of Christian goodness.

3. But joy is a thing of seasons. It has its ebb and flow, and would not be itself if it were constant. It is crossed, varied, shadowed unceasingly. On earth

sorrow ever follows in its track, as night chases day. No one knew this better than Paul. "Sorrowful," he says of himself (2 Cor. vi. 10), "yet always rejoicing:" a continual alternation, sorrow threatening every moment to extinguish, but serving to enhance his joy. Joy leans upon her graver sister *Peace.*

There is nothing fitful or febrile in the quality of Peace. It is a settled quiet of the heart, a deep, brooding mystery that "passeth all understanding," the stillness of eternity entering the spirit, the *Sabbath of God* (Heb. iv. 9). It is theirs who are "justified by faith" (Rom. v. 1, 2). It is the bequest of Jesus Christ (John xiv. 27). He "made peace for us through the blood of His cross." He has reconciled us with the eternal law, with the Will that rules all things without effort or disturbance. We pass from the region of misrule and mad rebellion into the kingdom of the Son of God's love, with its ordered freedom, its clear and tranquil light, its "central peace, subsisting at the heart of endless agitation."

After the war of the passions, after the tempests of doubt and fear, Christ has spoken, "Peace, be still!" A great calm spreads over the troubled waters; wind and wave lie down hushed at His feet. The demonic powers that lashed the soul into tumult, vanish before His holy presence. The Spirit of Jesus takes possession of mind and heart and will. And His fruit is peace—always peace. This one virtue takes the place of the manifold forms of contention which make life a chaos and a misery. While He rules, "the peace of God guards the heart and thoughts" and holds them safe from inward mutiny or outward assault; and the dissolute, turbulent train of the works of the flesh find the gates of the soul barred against them.

Peace is the calm, unruffled brow, the poised and even temper which Christian goodness wears.

4. The heart at peace with God has patience with men. "Charity *suffereth long*." She is not provoked by opposition; nor soured by injustice; no, nor crushed by men's contempt. She can afford to wait; for truth and love will conquer in the end. She knows in whose hand her cause is, and remembers how long *He* has suffered the unbelief and rebellion of an insensate world; she "considers Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself." Mercy and long-suffering are qualities that we share with God Himself, in which God was, and is, "manifest in the flesh." In this ripe fruit of the Spirit there are joined "the love of God, and the patience of Christ" (2 Thess. iii. 5).

Longsuffering is the patient magnanimity of Christian goodness, the broad shoulders on which it "beareth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 7).

5. "Charity suffereth long and *is kind*."

Gentleness (or *kindness*, as the word is more frequently and better rendered,) resembles "longsuffering" in finding its chief objects in the evil and unthankful. But while the latter is passive and self-contained, kindness is an active, busy virtue. She is moreover of a humble and tender spirit, stooping to the lowest need, thinking nothing too small in which she may help, ready to give back blessing for cursing, benefit for harm and wrong.

Kindness is the thoughtful insight, the delicate tact, the gentle ministering hand of Charity.

6. Linked with *kindness* comes *goodness*, which is its other self, differing from it only as twin sisters may, each fairer for the beauty of the other. Goodness is perhaps more affluent, more catholic in its bounty;

kindness more delicate and discriminating. The former looks to the benefit conferred, seeking to make it as large and full as possible; the latter has respect to the recipients, and studies to suit their necessity. While kindness makes its opportunities, and seeks out the most needy and miserable, goodness throws its doors open to all comers. Goodness is the more masculine and large-hearted form of charity; and if it errs, errs through blundering and want of tact. Kindness is the more feminine; and may err through exclusiveness and narrowness of view. United, they are perfect.

Goodness is the honest, generous face, the open hand of Charity.

7. This procession of the Virtues has conducted us, in the order of Divine grace, from the thought of a loving, forgiving God, the Object of our *love*, our *joy* and *peace*, to that of an evil-doing, unhappy world, with its need of *longsuffering* and *kindness;* and we now come to the inner, sacred circle of brethren beloved in Christ, where, with goodness, *faith*—that is, *trustfulness, confidence*—is called into exercise.

The Authorised rendering "faith" seems to us in this instance preferable to the "faithfulness" of the Revisers. "Possibly," says Bishop Lightfoot, "πίστις may here signify 'trustfulness, reliance,' in one's dealings with others; comp. 1 Cor. xiii. 7:" we should prefer to say "probably," or even "unmistakably," to this. The use of *pistis* in any other sense is rare and doubtful in Paul's Epistles. It is true that "God" or "Christ" is elsewhere implied as the object of faith; but where the word stands, as it does here, in a series of qualities belonging to human relationships, it finds, in agreement with its current meaning, another application. As a link between *goodness* and *meekness*, *trust-*

fulness, and nothing else, appears to be in place. The parallel expression of 1 Cor. xiii., of which chapter we find so many echoes in the text, we take to be decisive: "Charity *believeth* all things."

The faith that unites man to God, in turn joins man to his fellows. Faith in the Divine Fatherhood becomes trust in the human brotherhood. In this generous attribute the Galatians were sadly deficient. "Honour all men," wrote Peter to them; "love the brotherhood" (1 Pet. ii. 17). Their factiousness and jealousies were the exact opposite of this fruit of the Spirit. Little was there to be found in them of the love that "envieth and vaunteth not," which "imputeth not evil, nor rejoiceth in unrighteousness," which "beareth, believeth, hopeth, endureth all things." They needed more faith in *man*, as well as in God.

The true heart knows how to *trust*. He who doubts every one is even more deceived than the man who blindly confides in every one. There is no more miserable vice than cynicism; no man more ill-conditioned than he who counts all the world knaves or fools except himself. This poison of mistrust, this biting acid of scepticism is a fruit of irreligion. It is one of the surest signs of social and national decay.

The Christian man knows not only how to stand alone and to "bear all things," but also how to lean on others, strengthening himself by their strength and supporting them in weakness. He delights to "think others better" than himself; and here "meekness" is one with "faith." His own goodness gives him an eye for everything that is best in those around him.

Trustfulness is the warm, firm clasp of friendship, the generous and loyal homage which goodness ever pays to goodness.

8. *Meekness*, as we have seen, is the other side of *faith*. It is not tameness and want of spirit, as those who "judge after the flesh" are apt to think. Nor is meekness the mere quietness of a retiring disposition. "The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." It comports with the highest courage and activity; and is a qualification for public leadership. Jesus Christ stands before us as the perfect pattern of meekness. "I intreat you," pleads the Apostle with the self-asserting Corinthians, "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ!" Meekness is self-repression in view of the claims and needs of others; it is the "charity" which "seeketh not her own, looketh not to her own things, but to the things of others." For her, self is of no account in comparison with Christ and His kingdom, and the honour of His brethren.

Meekness is the content and quiet mien, the willing self-effacement that is the mark of Christlike goodness.

9. Finally *temperance*, or *self-control*,—third of Plato's cardinal virtues.

By this last link the chain of the virtues, at its higher end attached to the throne of the Divine love and mercy, is fastened firmly down into the actualities of daily habit and bodily regimen. *Temperance*, to change the figure, closes the array of the graces, holding the post of the rear-guard which checks all straggling and protects the march from surprise and treacherous overthrow.

If *meekness* is the virtue of the whole man as he stands before his God and in the midst of his fellows, *temperance* is that of his body, the tenement and instrument of the regenerate spirit. It is the antithesis of "drunkenness and revellings," which closed the list of

"works of the flesh," just as the preceding graces, from "peace" to "meekness," are opposed to the multiplied forms of "enmity" and "strife." Amongst ourselves very commonly the same limited contrast is implied. But to make "temperance" signify only or chiefly the avoidance of strong drink is miserably to narrow its significance. It covers the whole range of moral discipline, and concerns every sense and passion of our nature. Temperance is a practised mastery of self. It holds the reins of the chariot of life. It is the steady and prompt control of the outlooking sensibilities and appetencies, and inwardly moving desires. The tongue, the hand and foot, the eye, the temper, the tastes and affections, all require in turn to feel its curb. He is a temperate man, in the Apostle's meaning, who *holds himself well in hand*, who meets temptation as a disciplined army meets the shock of battle, by skill and alertness and tempered courage baffling the forces that outnumber it.

This also is a "fruit of the Spirit"—though we may count it the lowest and least, yet as indispensable to our salvation as the love of God itself. For the lack of this safeguard how many a saint has stumbled into folly and shame! It is no small thing for the Holy Spirit to accomplish in us, no mean prize for which we strive in seeking the crown of a perfect self-control. This mastery over the flesh is in truth the rightful prerogative of the human spirit, the dignity from which it fell through sin, and which the gift of the Spirit of Christ restores.

And this virtue in a Christian man is exercised for the behoof of others, as well as for his own. "I keep my body under," cries the Apostle, "I make it my slave and not my master; lest, having preached to

others, I myself should be a castaway"—that is self-regard, mere common prudence; but again, "It is good not to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor to do anything whereby a brother is made to stumble or made weak" (1 Cor. ix. 27; Rom. xiv. 21).

Temperance is the guarded step, the sober, measured walk in which Christian goodness keeps the way of life, and makes straight paths for stumbling and straying feet.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OUR BROTHER'S BURDEN AND OUR OWN.

"Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbour. For each man shall bear his own burden."—GAL. vi. 1—5.

THE division of the chapters at this point is almost as unfortunate as that between chaps. iv. and v. The introductory "Brethren" is not a form of transition to a new topic; it calls in the brotherly love of the Galatians to put an end to the bickerings and recriminations which the Apostle has censured in the preceding verses. How unseemly for *brethren* to be "vainglorious" towards each other, to be "provoking and envying one another!" If they are spiritual men, they should look more considerately on the faults of their neighbours, more seriously on their own responsibilities.

The Galatic temperament, as we have seen, was prone to the mischievous vanity which the Apostle here reproves. Those who had, or fancied they had, some superiority over others in talent or in character, prided themselves upon it. Even spiritual gifts were made matter of ostentation; and display on the part

of the more gifted excited the jealousy of inferior brethren. The same disposition which manifests itself in arrogance on the one side, on the other takes the form of discontent and envy. The heart-burnings and the social tension which this state of things creates, make every chance collision a danger; and the slightest wound is inflamed into a rankling sore. The stumbling brother is pushed on into a fall; and the fallen man, who might have been helped to his feet, is left to lie there, the object of unpitying reproach. Indeed, the lapse of his neighbour is to the vain-glorious man a cause of satisfaction rather than of sorrow. The other's weakness serves for a foil to his strength. Instead of stooping down to "restore such a one," he holds stiffly aloof in the eminence of conscious virtue; and bears himself more proudly in the lustre added to his piety by his fellow's disgrace. "God, I thank Thee," he seems to say, "that I am not as other men,—nor even as this wretched backslider!" The compellation "Brethren" is itself a rebuke to such heartless pride.

There are two reflections which should instantly correct the spirit of vain-glory. The Apostle appeals in the first place to *brotherly love*, to the claims that an erring fellow-Christian has upon our sympathy, to the meekness and forbearance which the Spirit of grace inspires, in fine to Christ's law which makes compassion our duty. At the same time he points out to us *our own infirmity* and exposure to temptation. He reminds us of the weight of our individual responsibility and the final account awaiting us. A proper sense at once of the rights of others and of our own obligations will make this shallow vanity impossible.

This double-edged exhortation takes shape in two

leading sentences, sharply clashing with each other in the style of paradox in which the Apostle loves to contrast the opposite sides of truth: "Bear ye one another's burdens" (ver. 2); and yet "Every man shall bear his own burden" (ver. 5).

I. What then are the considerations that commend *the burdens of others* for our bearing?

The burden the Apostle has in view is that of *a brother's trespass*: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in some trespass."

Here the question arises as to whether Paul means *overtaken by the temptation*, or *by the discovery of his sin*—surprised *into* committing, or *in* committing the trespass. Winer, Lightfoot, and some other interpreters, read the words in the latter sense: "*surprised, detected* in the act of committing any sin, so that his guilt is placed beyond a doubt" (Lightfoot). We are persuaded, notwithstanding, that the common view of the text is the correct one. The manner of the offender's detection has little to do with the way in which he should be treated; but the circumstances of his fall have everything to do with it. The suddenness, the surprise of his temptation is both a reason for more lenient judgment, and a ground for hope of his restoration. The preposition "in" (ἐν), it is urged, stands in the way of this interpretation. We might have expected to read "(surprised) *by*," or perhaps "*into* (any sin)." But the word is "trespass," not "sin." It points not to the cause of the man's fall, but to *the condition in which it has placed him*. The Greek preposition (according to a well known idiom of verbs of *motion*)* indicates the result of the

* For this pregnant force of ἐν see the grammarians: Moulton's *Winer*, pp. 514, 5; *A. Buttmann*, pp. 328, 9. (Eng. Ver.).

unexpected assault to which the man has been subject. A gust of temptation has caught him unawares; and we now see him lying overthrown and prostrate, involved "in some trespass."

The Apostle is supposing an instance—possibly an actual case—in which the sin committed was due to weakness and surprise, rather than deliberate intention; like that of Eve, when "the woman being beguiled fell into transgression."* Such a fall deserves commiseration. The attack was unlooked for; the man was off his guard. The Gallic nature is heedless and impulsive. Men of this temperament should make allowance for each other. An offence committed in a rash moment, under provocation, must not be visited with implacable severity, nor magnified until it become a fatal barrier between the evil-doer and society. And Paul says expressly, "If *a man* be overtaken"—a delicate reminder of our human infirmity and common danger (comp. 1 Cor. x. 13). Let us remember that it is a man who has erred, of like passions with ourselves; and his trespass will excite pity for him, and apprehension for ourselves.

Such an effect the occurrence should have upon "the spiritual," on the men of love and peace, who "walk in the Spirit." The Apostle's appeal is qualified by this definition. Vain and self-seeking men, the irritable, the resentful, are otherwise affected by a neighbour's trespass. They will be angry with him, lavish in virtuous scorn; but it is not in them to "restore such a one." They are more likely to aggravate than heal the wound, to push the weak man down when he tries to rise, than to help him to his feet.

* 1 Tim. ii. 14: the expression is parallel in point of grammar, as well as sense; *γέγονεν ἐν παραβάσει.*

The work of restoration needs a knowledge of the human heart, a self-restraint and patient skill, quite beyond their capability.

The *restoration* here signified, denotes not only, or not so much, the man's inward, spiritual renewal, as his recovery for the Church, the mending of the rent caused by his removal. In 1 Cor. i. 10; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 10, where, as in other places, the English verb "perfect" enters into the rendering of *καταρτίζω*, it gives the idea of re-adjustment, the right fitting of part to part, member to member, in some larger whole. Writing to the Corinthian Church at this time respecting a flagrant trespass committed there, for which the transgressor was now penitent, the Apostle bids its members "confirm their love" to him (2 Cor. ii. 5—11). So here "the spiritual" amongst the Galatians are urged to make it their business to *set right* the lapsed brother, to bring him back as soon and safely as might be to the fold of Christ.

Of all the fruits of the Spirit, *meekness* is most required for this office of restoration, the meekness of Christ the Good Shepherd—of Paul who was "gentle as a nurse" amongst his children, and even against the worst offenders preferred to "come in love and a spirit of meekness," rather than "with a rod" (1 Thess. ii. 7; 1 Cor. iv. 21). To reprove without pride or acrimony, to stoop to the fallen without the air of condescension, requires the "spirit of meekness" in a singular degree. Such a bearing lends peculiar grace to compassion. This "gentleness of Christ" is one of the finest and rarest marks of the spiritual man. The moroseness sometimes associated with religious zeal, the disposition to judge hardly the failings of

weaker men is anything but according to Christ. It is written of Him, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" (Isa. xlii. 3; Matt. xii. 20).

Meekness becomes sinful men dealing with fellow-sinners. "Considering *thyself*," says the Apostle, "lest thou also be tempted." It is a noticeable thing that men morally weak in any given direction are apt to be the severest judges of those who err in the same respect, just as people who have risen out of poverty are often the harshest towards the poor. They wish to forget their own past, and hate to be reminded of a condition from which they have suffered. Or is the judge, in sentencing a kindred offender, seeking to reinforce his own conscience and to give a warning to himself? One is inclined sometimes to think so. But reflection on our own infirmities should counteract, instead of fostering censoriousness. Every man knows enough of himself to make him chary of denouncing others. "Look to *thyself*," cries the Apostle. "Thou hast considered thy brother's faults. Now turn thine eye inward, and contemplate thine own. Hast thou never aforetime committed the offence with which he stands charged; or haply yielded to the like temptation in a less degree? Or if not even that, it may be thou art guilty of sins of another kind, though hidden from human sight, in the eyes of God no less heinous." "Judge not," said the Judge of all the earth, "lest ye be judged. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you" (Matt. vii. 1—5).

This exhortation begins in general terms; but in the latter clause of ver. 1 it passes into the individualising singular—"looking to *thyself*, lest even *thou* be tempted." The disaster befalling one reveals the common peril;

it is a signal for every member of the Church to take heed to himself. The scrutiny which it calls for belongs to each man's private conscience. And the faithfulness and integrity required in those who approach the wrongdoer with a view to his recovery, must be chastened by personal solicitude. The fall of a Christian brother should be in any case the occasion of heart-searching, and profound humiliation. Feelings of indifference towards him, much more of contempt, will prove the prelude of a worse overthrow for ourselves.

The burden of a brother's trespass is the most painful that can devolve upon a Christian man. But this is not the only burden we bring upon each other. There are burdens of anxiety and sorrow, of personal infirmity, of family difficulty, of business embarrassment, infinite varieties and complications of trial in which the resources of brotherly sympathy are taxed. The injunction of the Apostle has an unlimited range. That which burdens my friend and brother cannot be otherwise than a solicitude to me. Whatever it be that cripples him and hinders his running the race set before him, I am bound, according to the best of my judgement and ability, to assist him to overcome it. If I leave him to stagger on alone, to sink under his load when my shoulder might have eased it for him, the reproach will be mine.

This is no work of supererogation, no matter of mere liking and choice. I am not at liberty to refuse to share the burdens of the brotherhood. "Bear ye one another's burdens," Paul says, "and so fulfil *the law of Christ*." This law the Apostle has already cited and enforced against the contentions and jealousies rife in Galatia (ch. v. 14, 15). But it has a further application. Christ's law of love not only says,

"Thou shalt not bite and devour; thou shalt not provoke and envy thy brother;" but also, "Thou shalt help and comfort him, and regard his burden as thine own."

This law makes of the Church one body, with a solidarity of interests and obligations. It finds employment and discipline for the energy of Christian freedom, in yoking it to the service of the over-burdened. It reveals the dignity and privilege of moral strength, which consist not in the enjoyment of its own superiority, but in its power to bear "the infirmities of the weak." This was the glory of Christ, who "pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 1—4). The Giver of the law is its great Example. "Being in the form of God," He "took the form of a servant," that in love He might serve mankind; He "became obedient, unto the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 1—8). Justly is the inference drawn, "We also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John iii. 16). There is no limit to the service which the redeemed brotherhood of Christ may expect from its members.

Only this law must not be abused by the indolent and the overreaching, by the men who are ready to throw their burdens on others and make every generous neighbour the victim of their dishonesty. It is the need not the demand of our brother which claims our help. We are bound to take care that it is his necessity to which we minister, not his imposture or his slothfulness. The warning that "each man shall bear his own burden" is addressed to those who *receive*, as well as to those who render aid in the common burden-bearing of the Church.

II. The adjustment of social and individual duty is often far from easy, and requires the nicest discernment

and moral tact. Both are brought into view in this paragraph, in its latter as well as in its former section. But in vv. 1, 2 the need of others, in vv. 3—5 our personal responsibility forms the leading consideration. We see on the one hand, that a true self-regard teaches us to identify ourselves with the moral interests of others: while, on the other hand, a false regard to others is excluded (ver. 4) which disturbs the judgement to be formed respecting ourselves. The thought of *his own burden* to be borne by each man now comes to the front of the exhortation.

Ver. 3 stands between the two counterpoised estimates. It is another shaft directed against Galatian vain-glory, and pointed with Paul's keenest irony. "For if a man thinketh he is something, being nothing he deceiveth himself."

This truth is very evident. But what is its bearing on the matter in hand? The maxim is advanced to support the foregoing admonition. It was their self-conceit that led some of the Apostle's readers to treat with contempt the brother who had trespassed; he tells them that this opinion of theirs is a *delusion*, a kind of mental hallucination (φρεναπατᾷ ἑαυτόν). It betrays a melancholy ignorance. The "spiritual" man who "thinks himself to be something," says to you, "I am quite above these weak brethren, as you see. Their habits of life, their temptations are not mine. Their sympathy would be useless to me. And I shall not burden myself with their feebleness, nor vex myself with their ignorance and rudeness." If any man separates himself from the Christian commonalty and breaks the ties of religious fellowship on grounds of this sort, and yet imagines he is following Christ, he "deceives himself." Others will see how little his affected eminence is worth.

Some will humour his vanity; many will ridicule or pity it; few will be deceived by it.

The fact of a man's "thinking himself to be something" goes far to prove that he "is nothing." "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." Real knowledge is humble; it knows its nothingness. Socrates, when the oracle pronounced him the wisest man in Greece, at last discovered that the response was right, inasmuch as he alone was aware that he knew nothing, while other men were confident of their knowledge. And a greater than Socrates, our All-wise, All-holy Saviour, says to us, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." It is in humility and dependence, in self-forgetting that true wisdom begins. Who are we, although the most refined or highest in place, that we should despise plain, uncultured members of the Church, those who bear life's heavier burdens and amongst whom our Saviour spent His days on earth, and treat them as unfit for our company, unworthy of fellowship with us in Christ?

They are themselves the greatest losers who neglect to fulfil Christ's law. Such men might learn from their humbler brethren, accustomed to the trials and temptations of a working life and a rough world, how to bear more worthily their own burdens. How foolish of "the eye to say to the hand" or "foot, I have no need of thee!" "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith." There are truths of which they are our best teachers—priceless lessons of the power of Divine grace and the deep things of Christian experience. This isolation robs the poorer members of the Church in their turn of the manifold help due to them from communion with those more happily circumstanced. How many of the evils around us would be ameliorated,

how many of our difficulties would vanish, if we could bring about a truer Christian fraternisation, if caste-feeling in our English Church-life were once destroyed, if men would lay aside their stiffness and social *hauteur*, and cease to think that they "are something" on grounds of worldly distinction and wealth which in Christ are absolutely nothing.

The vain conceit of their superiority indulged in by some of his readers, the Apostle further corrects by reminding the self-deceivers of *their own responsibility*. The irony of ver. 3 passes into a sterner tone of warning in vv. 4 and 5. "Let each man try his own work," he cries. "Judge yourselves, instead of judging one another. Mind your own duty, rather than your neighbours' faults. Do not think of your worth or talents in comparison with theirs; but see to it that your *work* is right." The question for each of us is not, What do others fail to do? but, What am I myself really doing? What will my life's work amount to, when measured by that which God expects from me?

This question shuts each man up within his own conscience. It anticipates the final judgement-day. "Every one of us must give account of *himself* to God" (Rom. xiv. 12). Reference to the conduct of others is here out of place. The petty comparisons which feed our vanity and our class-prejudices are of no avail at the bar of God. I may be able for every fault of my own to find some one else more faulty. But this makes *me* no whit better. It is the intrinsic, not the comparative worth of character and daily work of which God takes account. If we study our brother's work, it should be with a view to enable him to do it better, or to learn to improve our own by his example; not

in order to find excuses for ourselves in his shortcomings.

"And then"—if our work abide the test—"we shall have our glorying in ourselves alone, not in regard to our neighbour." Not his flaws and failures, but my own honest work will be the ground of my satisfaction. This was Paul's "glorying" in face of the slanders by which he was incessantly pursued. It lay in the testimony of his conscience. He lived under the severest self-scrutiny. He knew himself as the man only can who "knows the fear of the Lord," who places himself every day before the dread tribunal of Christ Jesus. He is "made manifest unto God;" and in the light of that searching Presence he can affirm that he "knows nothing against himself." * But this boast makes him humble. "*By the grace of God*" he is enabled to "have his conversation in the world in holiness and sincerity coming of God." If he had seemed to claim any credit for himself, he at once corrects the thought: "Yet not I," he says, "but God's grace that was with me. I have my glorying in Christ Jesus in the things pertaining to God, in that which Christ hath wrought in me" (1 Cor. xv. 10; Rom. xv. 16—19).

So that this boast of the Apostle, in which he invites the vainglorious Galatians to secure a share, resolves itself after all into his one boast, "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 14). If his work on trial should prove to be gold, "abiding" amongst the world's imperishable treasures and fixed foundations of truth (1 Cor. iii. 10—15), Christ only was to be praised for this. Paul's glorying is the opposite of the

* 1 Cor. iv. 1—5; 2 Cor. i. 12; v. 10—12.

Legalist's, who presumes on his "works" as his own achievements, commending him for righteous before God. "Justified by works," such a man hath "whereof to glory, but not toward God" (Rom. iv. 2). His boasting redounds to himself. Whatever glory belongs to the work of the Christian must be referred to God. Such work furnishes no ground for magnifying the man at the expense of his fellows. If we praise the stream, it is to commend the fountain. If we admire the lives of the saints and celebrate the deeds of the heroes of faith, it is *ad majorem Dei gloriam*—"that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iv. 11).

"For each will bear his own load." Here is the ultimate reason for the self-examination to which the Apostle has been urging his readers, in order to restrain their vanity. The emphatic repetition of the words *each man* in vv. 4 and 5 brings out impressively the personal character of the account to be rendered. At the same time, the deeper sense of our own burdens thus awakened will help to stir in us sympathy for the loads under which our fellows labour. So that this warning indirectly furthers the appeal for sympathy with which the chapter began.

Faithful scrutiny of our work may give us reasons for satisfaction and gratitude towards God. But it will yield matter of another kind. It will call to remembrance old sins and follies, lost opportunities, wasted powers, with their burden of regret and humiliation. It will set before us the array of our obligations, the manifold tasks committed to us by our heavenly Master, compelling us to say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And beside the reproofs of the past and the stern demands of the present, there sounds in the soul's ear the message of the future, the summons to

our final reckoning. Each of us has his own life-load, made up of this triple burden. A thousand varying circumstances and individual experiences go to constitute the ever-growing load which we bear with us from youth to age, like the wayfarer his bundle, like the soldier his knapsack and accoutrements—the individual lot, the peculiar untransferable vocation and responsibility fastened by the hand of God upon our shoulders. This burden we shall have to carry up to Christ's judgement-seat. He is our Master; He alone can give us our discharge. His lips must pronounce the final "Well done"—or, "Thou wicked and slothful servant!"

In this sentence the Apostle employs a different word from that used in ver. 2. There he was thinking of the weight, the *burdensomeness* of our brother's troubles, which we haply may lighten for him, and which is so far common property. But the second word, *φορτίον* (applied for instance to *a ship's lading*), indicates *that which is proper to each* in the burdens of life. There are duties that we have no power to devolve, cares and griefs that we must bear in secret, problems that we must work out severally and for ourselves. To consider them aright, to weigh well the sum of our duty will dash our self-complacency; it will surely make us serious and humble. Let us wake up from dreams of self-pleasing to an earnest, manly apprehension of life's demands—"while," like the Apostle, "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen and eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18).

After all, it is the men who have the highest standard for themselves that as a rule are most considerate in

their estimate of others. The holiest are the most pitiful. They know best how to enter into the struggles of a weaker brother. They can appreciate his unsuccessful resistance to temptation; they can discern where and how he has failed, and how much of genuine sorrow there is in his remorse. From the fulness of their own experience they can interpret a possibility of better things in what excites contempt in those who judge by appearance and by conventional rules. He who has learned faithfully to "consider himself" and meekly to "bear his own burden," is most fit to do the work of Christ, and to shepherd His tempted and straying sheep. Strict with ourselves, we shall grow wise and gentle in our care for others.

In the Christian conscience the sense of personal and that of social responsibility serve each to stimulate and guard the other. Duty and sympathy, love and law are fused into one. For Christ is all in all; and these two hemispheres of life unite in Him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SOWING AND REAPING.

"But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith"—GAL. vi. 6—10.

EACH shall bear his own burden (ver. 5)—*but let there be communion of disciple with teacher in all that is good.* The latter sentence is clearly intended to balance the former. The transition turns upon the same antithesis between social and individual responsibility that occupied us in the foregoing Chapter. But it is now presented on another side. In the previous passage it concerned the conduct of "the spiritual" toward erring brethren whom they were tempted to despise; here, their behaviour toward teachers whom they were disposed to neglect. There it is inferiors, here superiors that are in view. The Galatian "vain-glory" manifested itself alike in provocation toward the former, and in envy toward the latter (ch. v. 26). In both ways it bred disaffection, and threatened to break up the Church's unity. The two effects are perfectly consistent. Those who are harsh in their

dealings with the weak, are commonly rude and insubordinate toward their betters, where they dare to be so. Self-conceit and self-sufficiency engender in the one direction a cold contempt, in the other a jealous independence. The former error is corrected by a due sense of our own infirmities; the latter by the consideration of our responsibility to God. We are compelled to feel for the burdens of others when we realise the weight of our own. We learn to respect the claims of those placed over us, when we remember what we owe to God through them. Personal responsibility is the last word of the former paragraph; social responsibility is the first word of this. Such is the contrast marked by the transitional *But*.

From this point of view ver. 6 gains a very comprehensive sense. "All good things" cannot surely be limited to the "carnal things" of 1 Cor. ix. 11. As Meyer and Beet amongst recent commentators clearly show, the context gives to this phrase a larger scope. At the same time, there is no necessity to exclude the thought of temporal good. The Apostle designedly makes his appeal as wide as possible. The reasoning of the corresponding passage in the Corinthian letter is a deduction from the general principle laid down here.

But it is *spiritual fellowship* that the Apostle chiefly desiderates. The true minister of Christ counts this vastly more sacred, and has this interest far more at heart than his own temporalities. He labours for the unity of the Church; he strives to secure the mutual sympathy and co-operation of all orders and ranks teachers and taught, officers and private members—"in every good word and work." He must have the heart of his people with him in his work, or his joy will be

faint and his success scant indeed. Christian teaching is designed to awaken this sympathetic response. And it will take expression in the rendering of whatever kind of help the gifts and means of the hearer and the needs of the occasion call for. Paul requires every member of the Body of Christ to make her wants and toils his own. We have no right to leave the burdens of the Church's work to her leaders, to expect her battles to be fought and won by the officers alone. This neglect has been the parent of innumerable mischiefs. Indolence in the laity fosters sacerdotalism in the clergy. But when, on the contrary, an active, sympathetic union is maintained between "him that is taught" and "him that teacheth," that other matter of the temporal support of the Christian ministry, to which this text is so often exclusively referred, comes in as a necessary detail, to be generously and prudently arranged, but which will not be felt on either side as a burden or a difficulty. Everything depends on the fellowship of spirit, on the strength of the bond of love that knits together the members of the Body of Christ. Here, in Galatia, that bond had been grievously weakened. In a Church so disturbed, the fellowship of teachers and taught was inevitably strained.

Such communion the Apostle craves from his children in the faith with an intense yearning. This is the one fruit of God's grace in them which he covets to reap for himself, and feels he has a right to expect. "Be ye as I am," he cries—"do not desert me, my children, for whom I travail in birth. Let me not have to toil for you in vain" (ch. iv. 12—19). So again, writing to the Corinthians: "It was *I* that begat you in Christ Jesus; I beseech you then, be followers of me. Let me remind you of my ways in the Lord. . . O ye Cor-

inthians, to you our mouth is open, our heart enlarged. Pay me back in kind (you are my children), and be ye too enlarged" (1 Cor. iv. 14—17; 2 Cor. vi. 11—13). He "thanks God" for the Philippians "on every remembrance of them," and "makes his supplication" for them "with joy, because of their fellowship in regard to the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. i. 3—7). Such is the fellowship which Paul wished to see restored in the Galatian Churches.

In ver. 10 he extends his appeal to embrace in it all the kindly offices of life. For the love inspired by the Church, the service rendered to her, should quicken all our human sympathies and make us readier to meet every claim of pity or affection. While our sympathies, like those of a loving family, will be concerned "especially" with "the household of faith," and within that circle more especially with our pastors and teachers in Christ, they have no limit but that of "opportunity;" they should "work that which is good toward all men." True zeal for the Church widens instead of narrowing, our charities. Household affection is the nursery, not the rival, of love to our fatherland and to humanity.

Now the Apostle is extremely urgent in this matter of communion between teachers and taught. It concerns the very life of the Christian community. The welfare of the Church and the progress of the kingdom of God depend on the degree to which its individual members accept their responsibility in its affairs. Ill-will towards Christian teachers is paralyzing in its effects on the Church's life. Greatly are *they* to blame, if their conduct gives rise to discontent. Only less severe is the condemnation of those in lower place who harbour in themselves and foster in the minds of others sentiments of disloyalty. To cherish this mistrust, to

withhold our sympathy from him who serves us in spiritual things, this, the Apostle declares, is not merely a wrong done to the man, it is an affront to God Himself. If it be God's Word that His servant teaches, then God expects some fitting return to be made for the gift He has bestowed. Of that return the pecuniary contribution, the meed of "carnal things" with which so many seem to think their debt discharged, is often the least and easiest part. How far have men a right to be hearers—profited and believing hearers—in the Christian congregation, and yet decline the duties of Church fellowship? They eat the Church's bread, but will not do her work. They expect like children to be fed and nursed and waited on; they think that if they *pay* their minister tolerably well, they have "communicated with" him quite sufficiently. This apathy has much the same effect as the Galatian bickerings and jealousies. It robs the Church of the help of the children whom she has nourished and brought up. Those who act thus are trying in reality to "mock God." They expect *Him* to sow his bounties upon them, but will not let Him reap. They refuse Him the return that He most requires for His choicest benefits.

Now, the Apostle says, God is not to be defrauded in this way. Men may wrong each other; they may grieve and affront His ministers. But no man is clever enough to cheat God. It is not Him, it is *themselves* they will prove to have deceived. Vain and selfish men who take the best that God and man can do for them as though it were a tribute to their greatness, envious and restless men who break the Church's fellowship of peace, will reap at last even as they sow. The mischief and the loss may fall on others now; but

in its full ripeness it will come in the end upon themselves. The final reckoning awaits us in another world. And as we act by God and by His Church now, in our day, so He will act hereafter by us in His day.

Thus the Apostle, in vv. 6 and 7, places this matter in the searching light of eternity. He brings to bear upon it one of the great spiritual maxims characteristic of his teaching. Paul's unique influence as a religious teacher lies in his mastery of principles of this kind, in the keenness of insight and the incomparable vigour with which he applies eternal truths to commonplace occurrences. The paltriness and vulgarity of these local broils and disaffections lend to his warning a more severe impressiveness. With what a startling and sobering force, one thinks, the rebuke of these verses must have fallen on the ears of the wrangling Galatians! How unspeakably mean their quarrels appear in the light of the solemn issues opening out before them! It was *God* whom their folly had presumed to mock. It was the harvest of eternal life of which their factiousness threatened to defraud them.

The principle on which this warning rests is stated in terms that give it universal application: *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* This is in fact the postulate of all moral responsibility. It asserts the continuity of personal existence, the connection of cause and effect in human character. It makes man the master of his own destiny. It declares that his future doom hangs upon his present choice, and is in truth its evolution and consummation. The twofold lot of "corruption" or "life eternal" is in every case no more, and no less, than the proper harvest of the kind of sowing practised here and now. The use made

of our seed-time determines exactly, and with a moral certainty greater even than that which rules in the natural field, what kind of fruitage our immortality will render.

This great axiom deserves to be looked at in its broadest aspect. It involves the following considerations :—

I. *Our present life is the seed-time of an eternal harvest.* Each recurring year presents a mirror of human existence. The analogy is a commonplace of the world's poetry. The spring is in every land a picture of youth—its morning freshness and innocence, its laughing sunshine, its opening blossoms, its bright and buoyant energy; and, alas, oftentimes its cold winds and nipping frosts and early, sudden blight! Summer images a vigorous manhood, with all the powers in action and the pulses of life beating at full swing; when the dreams of youth are worked out in sober, waking earnest; when manly strength is tested and matured under the heat of mid-day toil, and character is disciplined, and success or failure in life's battle must be determined. Then follows mellow autumn, season of shortening days and slackening steps and gathering snows; season too of ripe experience, of chastened thought and feeling, of widened influence and clustering honours. And the story ends in the silence and winter of the grave! *Ends?* Nay, that is a new beginning! This whole round of earthly vicissitude is but a single spring-time. It is the mere childhood of man's existence, the threshold of the vast house of life.

The oldest and wisest man amongst us is only a little child in the reckoning of eternity. The Apostle Paul counted himself no more. "We know in part," he says; "we prophesy in part—talking, reasoning

like children. We shall become *men*, seeing face to face, knowing as we are known" (1 Cor. xiii. 8, 11, 12). Do we not ourselves feel this in our higher moods? There is an instinct of immortality, a forecasting of some ampler existence, "a stirring of blind life" within the soul; there are visionary gleams of an unearthly Paradise haunting at times the busiest and most unimaginative men. We are intelligences in the germ, lying folded up in the chrysalis stage of our existence. Eyes, wings are still to come. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," no more than he who had seen but the seed-sowing of early spring and the bare wintry furrows, could imagine what the golden, waving harvest would be like. There is a glorious, everlasting kingdom of heaven, a world which in its duration, its range of action and experience, its style of equipment and occupation, will be worthy of the elect children of God. Worship, music, the purest passages of human affection and of moral elevation, may give us some foretaste of its joys. But what it will be really like, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor heart of man conceived."

Think of that, struggling heart, worn with labour, broken by sorrow, cramped and thwarted by the pressure of an unkindly world. "The earnest expectancy of the creation" waits for your revealing (Rom. viii. 19). You will have your enfranchisement; your soul will take wing at last. Only have faith in God, and in righteousness; only "be not weary in well-doing." Those crippled powers will get their full play. Those baffled purposes and frustrated affections will unfold and blossom into a completeness undreamed of now, in the sunshine of heaven, in "the liberty of the glory of the sons of God." Why look for your harvest here! It is *March*, not August yet. "*In due season* we shall

reap, if we faint not." See to it that you "sow to the Spirit," that your life be of the true seed of the kingdom; and for the rest, have no care nor fear. What should we think of the farmer who in winter, when his fields were frost-bound, should go about wringing his hands and crying that his labour was all lost! Are we wiser in our despondent moods? However dreary and unpromising, however poor and paltry in its outward seeming the earthly seed-time, your life's work will have its resurrection. Heaven lies hidden in those daily acts of humble, difficult duty, even as the giant oak with its centuries of growth and all its summer glory sleeps in the acorn-cup. No eye may see it now; but "the Day will declare it!"

II. In the second place, *the quality of the future harvest depends entirely on the present sowing.*

In *quantity*, as we have seen, in outward state and circumstance, there is a complete contrast. The harvest surpasses the seed from which it sprang, by thirty, sixty or a hundred-fold. But in *quality* we find a strict agreement. In degree they may differ infinitely; in kind they are one. The harvest multiplies the effect of the sower's labour; but it multiplies exactly that effect, and nothing else. This law runs through all life. If we could not count upon it, labour would be purposeless and useless; we should have to yield ourselves passively to nature's caprice. The farmer sows wheat in his cornfield, the gardener plants and trains his fig-tree; and he gets wheat, or figs, for his reward—nothing else. Or is he a "sluggard" that "will not plow by reason of the cold?" Does he let weeds and thistledown have the run of his garden-plot? Then it yields him a plentiful harvest of thistles and of weeds! What could he expect? "Men do not

gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." From the highest to the lowest order of living things, each grows and fructifies "after its kind." This is the rule of nature, the law which constituted *Nature* at the beginning. The good tree brings forth good fruit; and the good seed makes the good tree.

All this has its moral counterpart. The law of reproduction in kind holds equally true of the relation of this life to the next. Eternity for us will be the multiplied, consummated outcome of the good or evil of the present life. Hell is just sin ripe—rotten ripe. Heaven is the fruitage of righteousness. There will be two kinds of reaping, the Apostle tells us, because there are two different kinds of sowing. "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption:" there is nothing arbitrary or surprising in that. "Corruption"—the moral decay and dissolution of the man's being—is the natural retributive effect of his carnality. And "he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Here, too, the sequence is inevitable. Like breeds its like. Life springs of life; and death eternal is the culmination of the soul's present death to God and goodness. The future glory of the saints is at once a Divine reward, and a necessary development of their present faithfulness. And eternal life lies germinally contained in faith's earliest beginning, when it is but as "a grain of mustard seed." We may expect in our final state the outcome of our present conduct, as certainly as the farmer who puts wheat into his furrows in November will count on getting wheat out of them again next August.

Under this law of the harvest we are living at this moment, and sowing every day the seed of an immortality of honour or of shame. Life is the seed-plot of

eternity; and *youth is above all the seed-time of life.* What are our children doing with these precious, vernal years? What is going into their minds? What ideas, what desires are rooting themselves in these young souls? If it be pure thoughts and true affections, love to God, self-denial, patience and humility, courage to do what is right—if these be the things that are sown in their hearts, there will be for them, and for us, a glorious harvest of wisdom and love and honour in the years to come, and in the day of eternity. But if sloth and deceit be there, and unholy thoughts, vanity and envy and self-indulgence, theirs will be a bitter harvesting. Men talk of "sowing their wild oats," as though that were an end of it; as though a wild and prodigal youth might none the less be followed by a sober manhood and an honoured old age. But it is not so. If wild oats have been sown, there will be wild oats to reap, as certainly as autumn follows spring. For every time the youth deceives parent or teacher, let him know that he will be deceived by the Father of lies a hundred times. For every impure thought or dishonourable word, shame will come upon him sixty-fold. If his mind be filled with trash and refuse, then trash and refuse are all it will be able to produce. If the good seed be not timely sown in his heart, thorns and nettles will sow themselves there fast enough; and his soul will become like the sluggard's garden, rank with base weeds and poison-plants, a place where all vile things will have their resort,—"rejected and nigh unto a curse."

Who is "he that soweth to his own flesh?" It is, in a word, the *selfish* man. He makes his personal interest, and as a rule his bodily pleasure, directly or ultimately, the object of life. The sense of responsi-

bility to God, the thought of life as a stewardship of which one must give account, have no place in his mind. He is a "lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God." His desires, unfixed on God, steadily tend downwards. Idolatry of self becomes slavery to the flesh. Every act of selfish pleasure-seeking, untouched by nobler aims, weakens and worsens the soul's life. The selfish man gravitates downward into the sensual man; the sensual man downward into the bottomless pit.

This is the "minding of the flesh" which "is death" (Rom. viii. 5—8, 13). For it is "enmity against God" and defiance of His law. It overthrows the course of nature, the balance of our human constitution; it brings disease into the frame of our being. The flesh, unsubdued and uncleansed by the virtue of the Spirit, breeds "corruption." Its predominance is the sure presage of death. The process of decay begins already, this side the grave; and it is often made visible by appalling signs. The bloated face, the sensual leer, the restless, vicious eye, the sullen brow tell us what is going on within. The man's soul is rotting in his body. Lust and greed are eating out of him the capacity for good. And if he passes on to the eternal harvest as he is, if that fatal corruption is not arrested, what doom can possibly await such a man but that of which our merciful Saviour spoke so plainly that we might tremble and escape—"the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched!"

III. And finally, *God Himself is the Lord of the moral harvest.* The rule of retribution, the nexus that binds together our sowing and our reaping, is not something automatic and that comes about of itself; it is directed by the will of God, who "worketh all in all."

Even in the natural harvest we look upwards to Him. The order and regularity of nature, the fair procession of the seasons waiting on the silent and majestic march of the heavens, have in all ages directed thinking and grateful men to the Supreme Giver, to the creative Mind and sustaining Will that sits above the worlds. As Paul reminded the untutored Lycaonians, "He hath not left Himself without witness, in that He gave us rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." It is "God" that "gives the increase" of the husbandman's toil, of the merchant's forethought, of the artist's genius and skill. We do not sing our harvest songs, with our Pagan forefathers, to sun and rain and west wind, to mother Earth and the mystic powers of Nature. In these poetic idolatries were yet blended higher thoughts and a sense of Divine beneficence. But "to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him." In the harvest of the earth man is a worker together with God. The farmer does his part, fulfilling the conditions God has laid down in nature; "he putteth in the wheat in rows, and the barley in its appointed place; for his God doth instruct him aright, and doth teach him." He tills the ground, he sows the seed—and there he leaves it *to God*. "He sleeps and rises night and day; and the seed springs and grows up, he knows not how." And the wisest man of science cannot tell him how. "God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased Him." But *how*—that is His own secret, which He seems likely to keep. All life in its growth, as in its inception, is a mystery, hid with Christ in God. Every seed sown in field or garden is a deposit committed to the faithfulness of God; which He honours

by raising it up again, thirty, sixty, or a hundred-fold, in the increase of the harvest.

In the moral world this Divine co-operation is the more immediate, as the field of action lies nearer, if one may so say, to the nature of God Himself. The earthly harvest may, and does often fail. Storms waste it; blights canker it; drought withers, or fire consumes it. Industry and skill, spent in years of patient labour, are doomed not unfrequently to see their reward snatched from them. The very abundance of other lands deprives our produce of its value. The natural creation "was made subject to vanity." Its frustration and disappointment are over-ruled for higher ends. But in the spiritual sphere there are no casualties, no room for accident or failure. Here life comes directly into contact with the Living God, its fountain; and its laws partake of His absoluteness.

Each act of faith, of worship, of duty and integrity, is a compact between the soul and God. We "*commit our souls* in well-doing unto a faithful Creator" (1 Pet. iv. 19). By every such volition the heart is yielding itself to the direction of the Divine Spirit. It "sows unto the Spirit," whenever in thought or deed His prompting is obeyed and His will made the law of life. And as in the soil, by the Divine chemistry of nature, the tiny germ is nursed and fostered out of sight, till it lifts itself from the sod a lovely flower, a perfect fruit, so in the order of grace it will prove that from the smallest seeds of goodness in human hearts, from the feeblest beginnings of the life of faith, from the lowliest acts of love and service, God in due season will raise up a glorious harvest for which heaven itself will be the richer.

THE EPILOGUE.

CHAPTER VI. 11—18.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE GLORYING.

"See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised; only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."—GAL. vi. 11—14.

THE rendering of ver. 11 in the Authorised Version is clearly erroneous (*see how large a letter*). Wickliff, guided by the Latin Vulgate—*with what maner lettris*—escaped this error. It is a *plural* term the Apostle uses, which occasionally in Greek writers denotes an epistle (as in Acts xxviii. 21), but nowhere else in Paul. Moreover the noun is in the *dative* (instrumental) case, and cannot be made the object of the verb.

Paul draws attention at this point to his penmanship, to the size of the letters he is using and their autographic form. "See," he says, "I write this in large characters, and under my own hand." But does this remark apply to *the whole Epistle*, or to *its concluding paragraph* from this verse onwards? To the latter only, as we think. The word "look" is a kind of *nota bene*. It marks something new, designed by its form and appearance in the manuscript to arrest the eye.

It was Paul's practice to write through an amanuensis, adding with his own hand a few final words of greeting or blessing, by way of authentication.* Here this usage is varied. The Apostle wishes to give these closing sentences the utmost possible emphasis and solemnity. He would print them on the very heart and soul of his readers. This intention explains the language of ver. 11; and it is borne out by the contents of the verses that follow. They are a postscript, or *Epilogue*, to the Epistle, rehearsing with incisive brevity the burden of all that it was in the Apostle's heart to say to these troubled and shaken Galatians.

The past tense of the verb (literally, *I have written*: ἔγραψα) is in accordance with Greek epistolary idiom. The writer associates himself with his readers. When the letter comes to them, Paul *has written* what they now peruse. On the assumption that the whole Epistle is autographic it is hard to see what object the large characters would serve, or why they should be referred to just at this point.

Ver. 11 is in fact a sensational heading. The last paragraph of the Epistle is penned in larger type and in the Apostle's characteristic hand, in order to fasten the attention of these impressionable Galatians upon his final deliverance. This device Paul employs but once. It is a kind of practice easily vulgarised and that loses its force by repetition, as in the case of "loud" printing and declamatory speech.

In this emphatic finale the interest of the Epistle, so powerfully sustained and carried through so many stages, is raised to a yet higher pitch. Its pregnant

* See 2 Thess. iii. 17, 18; 1 Cor. xvi. 21—23. In ver. 22 of the latter passage we can trace a similar autographic message, on a smaller scale. Comp. also Philemon 19.

sentences give us—*first*, another and still severer denunciation of "the troublers" (vv. 12, 13); *secondly*, a renewed protestation of the Apostle's devotion to the cross of Christ (vv. 14, 15); *thirdly*, a repetition in animated style of the practical doctrine of Christianity, and a blessing pronounced upon those who are faithful to it (vv. 15, 16). A pathetic reference to the writer's personal sufferings, followed by the customary benediction, brings the letter to a close. The first two topics of the Epilogue stand in immediate contrast with each other.

I. *The glorying of the Apostle's adversaries.* "They would have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh" (ver. 12).

This is the climax of his reproach against them. It gives us the key to their character. The boast measures the man. The aim of the Legalists was to get so many Gentiles circumcised, to win proselytes through Christianity to Judaism. Every Christian brother persuaded to submit himself to this rite was another trophy for them. His circumcision, apart from any moral or spiritual considerations involved in the matter, was of itself enough to fill these proselytizers with joy. They counted up their "cases;" they rivalled each other in the competition for Jewish favour on this ground. To "glory in your flesh—to be able to point to your bodily condition as the proof of their influence and their devotion to the Law—this," Paul says, "is the object for which they ply you with so many flatteries and sophistries."

Their aim was intrinsically low and unworthy. They "want to make a fair show (to present a good face) in the flesh." *Flesh* in this place (ver. 12) recalls the contrast between *Flesh* and *Spirit* expounded in the

last chapter. Paul does not mean that the Judaizers wish to "make a good appearance *in outward respects, in human opinion:*" this would be little more than tautology. The expression stamps the Circumcisionists as "carnal" men. They are "not in the Spirit," but "in the flesh;" and "after the flesh" they walk. It is on worldly principles that they seek to commend themselves, and to unspiritual men. What the Apostle says of himself in Phil. iii. 3, 4, illustrates by contrast his estimate of the Judaizers of Galatia: "We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and *have no confidence in the flesh.*" He explains "having confidence in the flesh" by enumerating his own advantages and distinctions as a Jew, the circumstances which commended him in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen—"which were gain to me," he says, "but I counted them loss for Christ" (ver. 7). In that realm of fleshly motive and estimate which Paul had abandoned, his opponents still remained. They had exchanged Christian fidelity for worldly favour. And their religion took the colour of their moral disposition. To *make a fair show*, an imposing, plausible appearance in ceremonial and legal observance, was the mark they set themselves. And they sought to draw the Church with them in this direction, and to impress upon it their own ritualistic type of piety.

This was a worldly, and in their case a *cowardly* policy. "They constrain you to be circumcised, only that for the cross of Christ they may not suffer persecution" (ver. 12). This they were determined by all means to avoid. Christ had sent His servants forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves." The man that would serve Him, He said, must "follow Him, taking up his cross." But the Judaists thought they

knew better than this. They had a plan by which they could be the friends of Jesus Christ, and yet keep on good terms with the world that crucified Him. They would make their faith in Jesus a means for winning over proselytes to Judaism. If they succeeded in this design, their apostasy might be condoned. The circumcised Gentiles would propitiate the anger of their Israelite kindred, and would incline them to look more favourably upon the new doctrine These men, Paul says to the Galatians, are sacrificing you to their cowardice. They rob you of your liberties in Christ in order to make a shield for themselves against the enmity of their kinsmen. They pretend great zeal on your behalf; they are eager to introduce you into the blessings of the heirs of Abraham: the truth is, they are victims of a miserable fear of persecution.

The cross of Christ, as the Apostle has repeatedly declared (comp. Chapters XII and XXI), carried with it in Jewish eyes a flagrant reproach; and its acceptance placed a gulf between the Christian and the orthodox Jew. The depth of that gulf became increasingly apparent the more widely the gospel spread, and the more radically its principles came to be applied. To Paul it was now sorrowfully evident that the Jewish nation had rejected Christianity. They would not hear the Apostles of Jesus any more than the Master. For the preaching of the cross they had only loathing and contempt. Judaism recognised in the Church of the Crucified its most dangerous enemy, and was opening the fire of persecution against it all along the line. In this state of affairs, for a party of men to compromise and make private terms for themselves with the enemies of Christ was treachery. They were surrendering, as this Epistle shows, all that

was most vital to Christianity. They gave up the honour of the gospel, the rights of faith, the salvation of the world, rather than face the persecution in store for those "who will live godly in Christ Jesus."

Not that they cared so much for the law in itself. Their glorying was *insincere*, as well as selfish: "For neither do the circumcised themselves keep the law. —These men who profess such enthusiasm for the law of Moses and insist so zealously on your submission to it, dishonour it by their own behaviour." The Apostle is denouncing the same party throughout. Some interpreters make the first clause of ver. 13 a parenthesis, supposing that "the circumcised" (participle present: *those being circumcised*) are *Gentile perverts* now being gained over to Judaism, while the foregoing and following sentences relate to the Jewish teachers. But the context does not intimate, nor indeed allow such a change of subject. It is "the circumcised" of ver. 13 *a* who in ver. 13 *b* wish to see the Galatians circumcised, "in order to boast over their flesh,"—the same who, in ver. 12, "desire to make a fair show in the flesh" and to escape Jewish persecution. Reading this in the light of the previous chapters, there seems to us no manner of doubt as to the persons thus designated. They are the Circumcisionists, Jewish Christians who sought to persuade the Pauline Gentile Churches to adopt circumcision and to receive their own legalistic perversion of the gospel of Christ. The present tense of the Greek participle, used as it is here with the definite article,* has the power of becoming a *substantive*, dropping its reference to time; for the act denoted

* οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι (*Revised Text*). On this idiom, see Winer's *Grammar*, p. 444; A. Buttmann's *N. T. Grammar*, p. 296. In ch. i. 23, and in ii. 2 (τ. δοκοῦσι), we have had instances of this usage.

passes into an abiding characteristic, so that the expression acquires the form of a title. "The circumcised" are *the men of the circumcision*, those known to the Galatians in this character.

The phrase is susceptible, however, of a wider application. When Paul writes thus, he is thinking of others besides the handful of troublers in Galatia. In Rom. ii. 17—29 he levels this identical charge of hypocritical law-breaking against the Jewish people at large: "Thou who gloriest in the law," he exclaims, "through thy transgression of the law dishonourest thou God?" This shocking inconsistency, notorious in contemporary Judaism, was to be observed in the conduct of the legalist zealots in Galatia. They broke themselves the very law which they tried to force on others. Their pretended jealousy for the ordinances of Moses was itself their condemnation. It was not the glory of the law they were concerned about, but their own.

The policy of the Judaizers was dishonourable both in spirit and in aim. They were false to Christ in whom they professed to believe; and to the law which they pretended to keep. They were facing both ways, studying the safest, not the truest course, anxious in truth to be friends at once with the world and Christ. Their conduct has found many imitators, in men who "make godliness a way of gain," whose religious course is dictated by considerations of worldly self-interest. A little persecution, or social pressure, is enough to "turn them out of the way." They cast off their Church obligations as they change their clothes, to suit the fashion. Business patronage, professional advancement, a tempting family alliance, the *entrée* into some select and envied circle—such are the things for which creeds are bartered, for which men put their

souls and the souls of their children knowingly in peril. *Will it pay?*—this is the question which comes in with a decisive weight in their estimate of matters of religious profession and the things pertaining to God. But "what shall it profit?" is the question of Christ.

Nor are they less culpable who bring these motives into play, and put this kind of pressure on the weak and dependent. There are forms of social and pecuniary influence, bribes and threats quietly applied and well understood, which are hardly to be distinguished morally from persecution. Let wealthy and dominant Churches see to it that they be clear of these offences, that they make themselves the protectors, not the oppressors of spiritual liberty. The adherents that a Church secures by its worldly prestige do not in truth belong to the "kingdom that is not of this world." Such successes are no triumphs of the cross. Christ repudiates them. The glorying that attends proselytism of this kind is, like that of Paul's Judaistic adversaries, a "glorying in the flesh."

II. "But as for me," cries the Apostle, "far be it to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 14). Paul knows but one ground of exultation, one object of pride and confidence—*his Saviour's cross.*

Before he had received his gospel and seen the cross in the light of revelation, like other Jews he regarded it with horror. Its existence covered the cause of Jesus with ignominy. It marked Him out as the object of Divine abhorrence. To the Judaistic Christian the cross was still an embarrassment. He was secretly ashamed of a crucified Messiah, anxious by some means to excuse the scandal and make amends for it in the face of Jewish public opinion. But now this disgraceful cross in the Apostle's eyes is the most glorious thing

in the universe. Its message is the good news of God to all mankind. It is the centre of faith and religion, of all that man knows of God or can receive from Him. Let it be removed, and the entire structure of revelation falls to pieces, like an arch without its keystone. The shame of the cross was turned into honour and majesty. Its foolishness and weakness proved to be the wisdom and the power of God. Out of the gloom in which Calvary was shrouded there now shone forth the clearest light of holiness and love.

Paul gloried in the cross of Christ because it manifested to him *the character of God*. The Divine love and righteousness, the entire range of those moral excellences which in their sovereign perfection belong to the holiness of God, were there displayed with a vividness and splendour hitherto inconceivable. "God so loved the world," and yet so honoured the law of right, that "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." How stupendous is this sacrifice, which baffles the mind and overwhelms the heart! Nowhere in the works of creation, nor in any other dispensation of justice or mercy touching human affairs, is there a spectacle that appeals to us with an effect to be compared with that of the Sufferer of Calvary.

Let me look, let me think again. Who is He that bleeds on that tree of shame? Why does the Holy One of God submit to these indignities? Why those cruel wounds, those heart-breaking cries that speak of a soul pierced by sorrows deeper than all that bodily anguish can inflict? Has the Almighty indeed forsaken Him? Has the Evil One sealed his triumph in the blood of the Son of God? Is it God's mercy to the world, or is it not rather Satan's hate and man's utter wickedness that stand here revealed? The issue

shows with whom victory lay in the dread conflict fought out in the Redeemer's soul and flesh. "*God* was in Christ"—living, dying, rising. And what was He doing in Christ?—"reconciling the world unto Himself."

Now we know what the Maker of the worlds is like "He that hath seen Me," said Jesus on Passion Eve, "hath seen the Father. From henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." What the world knew before of the Divine character and intentions towards man was but "poor, weak rudiments." Now the believer has come to *Peniel;* like Jacob, he has "seen the face of God." He has touched the centre of things. He has found the secret of love.

Moreover, the Apostle gloried in the cross because it was *the salvation of men.* His love for men made him boast of it, no less than his zeal for God. The gospel burning in his heart and on his lips, was "God's power unto salvation, both to Jew and Greek." He says this not by way of speculation or theological inference, but as the testimony of his constant experience. It was bringing men by thousands from darkness into light, raising them from the slough of hideous vices and guilty despair, taming the fiercest passions, breaking the strongest chains of evil, driving out of human hearts the demons of lust and hate. This message, wherever it went, was *saving* men, as nothing had done before, as nothing else has done since. What lover of his kind would not rejoice in this?

We are members of a weak and suffering race, groaning each in his own fashion under "the law of sin and death," crying out ever and anon with Paul, "O wretched man that I am!" If the misery of our bondage was acute its darkness extreme, how great

is the joy with which we hail our Redeemer! It is the gladness of an immense relief, the joy of salvation. And our triumph is redoubled when we perceive that His grace brings us not deliverance for ourselves alone, but commissions us to impart it to our fellow-men. "Thanks be to God," cries the Apostle, "who always leadeth us in triumph, and maketh known the savour of His knowledge by us in every place" (2 Cor. ii. 14).

The essence of the gospel revealed to Paul, as we have observed more than once, lay in its conception of the office of the cross of Christ. Not the Incarnation —the basis of the manifestation of the Father in the Son; not the sinless life and superhuman teaching of Jesus, which have moulded the spiritual ideal of faith and supplied its contents; not the Resurrection and Ascension of the Redeemer, crowning the Divine edifice with the glory of life eternal; but *the sacrifice of the cross* is the focus of the Christian revelation. This gives to the gospel its *saving* virtue. Round this centre all other acts and offices of the Saviour revolve, and from it receive their healing grace. From the hour of the Fall of man the manifestations of the Divine grace to him ever looked forward to Calvary; and to Calvary the testimony of that grace has looked backward ever since. "By this sign" the Church has conquered; the innumerable benefits with which her teaching has enriched mankind must all be laid in tribute at the foot of the cross.

The atonement of Jesus Christ demands from us a faith like Paul's, a faith of *exultation*, a boundless enthusiasm of gratitude and confidence. If it is worth believing in at all, it is worth believing in heroically. Let us so boast of it, so exhibit in our lives its power, so spend ourselves in serving it, that we may justly

claim from all men homage toward the Crucified. Let us lift up the cross of Christ till its glory shines world-wide, till, as He said, it "draws all men unto Him." If we triumph in the cross, we shall triumph by it. It will carry the Church to victory.

And the cross of Jesus Christ is the salvation of men, just because it is the revelation of God. It is "life eternal," said Jesus to the Father, "*to know Thee.*" The gospel does not save by mere pathos, but by knowledge—by bringing about a right understanding between man and his Maker, a reconciliation. It brings God and man together in the light of truth. In this revelation we see *Him*, the Judge and the Father, the Lord of the conscience and the Lover of His children; and we see *ourselves*—what our sins mean, what they have done. God is face to face with the world. Holiness and sin meet in the shock of Calvary, and flash into light, each illuminated by contrast with the other. And the view of what God is in Christ—how He judges, how He pities us—once fairly seen, breaks the heart, kills the love of sin. "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," sitting on that thorn-crowned brow, clothing that bleeding Form rent with the anguish of Mercy's conflict with Righteousness on our behalf—it is this which "shines in our hearts" as in Paul's, and cleanses the soul by its pity and its terror. But this is no dramatic scene, it is Divine, eternal fact. "We have beheld and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. We *know* and have believed the love that God hath to us" (1 John iv. 14, 16).

Such is the relation to God which the cross has established for the Apostle. In what position does it place him toward *the world?* To it, he tells us, he has bidden farewell. Paul and the world are dead to each

other. The cross stands between them. In ch. ii. 20 he had said, "*I* am crucified with Christ;" in ch. v. 24, that his "*flesh* with its passions and lusts" had undergone this fate; and now he writes, "Through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ *the world* is crucified to me, and I to the world."

Literally, *a world*—a whole world was crucified for Paul when his Lord died upon the cross. The world that slew Him put an end to itself, so far as he is concerned. He can never believe in it, never take pride in it, nor do homage to it any more. It is stripped of its glory, robbed of its power to charm or govern him. The death of shame that old "evil world" inflicted upon Jesus has, in Paul's eyes, reverted to itself; while for the Saviour it is changed into a life of heavenly glory and dominion. The Apostle's life is withdrawn from it, to be "hid with Christ in God."

This "crucifixion" is therefore mutual. The Apostle also "is crucified to the world." Saul the Pharisee was a reputable, religious man of the world, recognised by it, alive to it, taking his place in its affairs. But that "old man" has been "crucified with Christ." The present Paul is in the world's regard another person altogether—"the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things," no better than his crucified Master and worthy to share His punishment. He is dead—"crucified" to it. Faith in Jesus Christ placed a gulf, wide as that which parts the dead and living, between the Church of the Apostles and men around them. The cross parted two worlds wholly different. He who would go back into that other world, the world of godless self-pleasing and fleshly idolatry, must step over the cross of Christ to do it.

"*To me*," testifies Paul, "the world is crucified."

And the Church of Christ has still to witness this confession. We read in it a prophecy. Evil must die. The world that crucified the Son of God, has written its own doom. With its Satanic Prince it "has been judged" (John xii. 31; xvi. 11). Morally, it is dead already. The sentence has passed the Judge's lips. The weakest child of God may safely defy it, and scorn its boasting. Its visible force is still immense; its subjects multitudinous; its empire to appearance hardly shaken. It towers like Goliath confronting "the armies of the living God." But the foundation of its strength is gone. Decay saps its frame. Despair creeps over its heart. The consciousness of its impotence and misery grows upon it.

Worldliness has lost its old serenity irrecoverably. The cross incessantly disturbs it, and haunts its very dreams. Antichristian thought at the present time is one wide fever of discontent. It is sinking into the vortex of pessimism. Its mockery is louder and more brilliant than ever; but there is something strangely convulsive in it all; it is the laughter of despair, the dance of death.

Christ the Son of God *has* come down from the cross, as they challenged Him. But coming down, He has fastened there in His place the world that taunted Him. Struggle as it may, it cannot unloose itself from its condemnation, from the fact that it has killed its Prince of Life. The cross of Jesus Christ must save—or destroy. The world must be reconciled to God, or it will perish. On the foundation laid of God in Zion men will either build or break themselves for ever. The world that hated Christ and the Father, the world that Paul cast from him as a dead thing, cannot endure. It "passeth away, and the lust thereof."

CHAPTER XXIX.

RITUAL NOTHING: CHARACTER EVERYTHING.

"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace *be* upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."—GAL. vi. 15, 16.

VERSE 14 comprehends the whole theology of the Epistle, and ver. 15 brings to a head its practical and ethical teaching. This apophthegm is one of the landmarks of religious history. It ranks in importance with Christ's great saying: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him, must worship in spirit and truth" (John iv. 21—24). These sentences of Jesus and of Paul taken together mark the dividing line between the Old and the New Economy. They declare the nature of the absolute religion, from the Divine and human side respectively. God's pure spiritual being is affirmed by Jesus Christ to be henceforth the norm of religious worship. The exclusive sacredness of Jerusalem, or of Gerizim, had therefore passed away. On the other hand, and regarding religion from its psychological side, as matter of experience and attainment, it is set forth by our Apostle as an inward life, a spiritual condition, dependent on no outward form or performance whatsoever. Paul's principle is a consequence of that declared by his Master. If "God is a Spirit," to be known and approached as such, ceremonial at once loses its predominance; it sinks into the accidental

the merely provisional and perishing element of religion. Faith is no longer bound to material conditions; it passes inward to its proper seat in the spirit of man. And the dictum that "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision nothing" (comp. ch. v. 6; 1 Cor. vii. 19), becomes a watchword of Christian theology.

This Pauline axiom is advanced to justify the confession of the Apostle made in ver. 14; it supports the protest of vv. 12—14 against the devotees of circumcision, who professed faith in Christ but were ashamed of His cross. "That Judaic rite in which you glory," he says, "is nothing. Ritual qualifications and disqualifications are abolished. Life in the Spirit, the new creation that begins with faith in Christ crucified —that is everything." The boasts of the Judaizers were therefore folly: they rested on "nothing." The Apostle's glorying alone was valid: the new world of "the kingdom of God," with its "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," was there to justify it.

I. *For neither is circumcision anything.*—Judaism is abolished at a stroke! With it circumcision was *everything*. "The circumcision" and "the people of God" were in Israelitish phrase terms synonymous. "Uncircumcision" embraced all that was heathenish, outcast and unclean.

The Mosaic polity made the status of its subjects, their relation to the Divine covenant, to depend on this initiatory rite. "Circumcised the eighth day," the child came under the rule and guardianship of the sacred Law. In virtue of this mark stamped upon his body, he was *ipso facto* a member of the congregation of the Lord, bound to all its duties, so far as his age

permitted, and partner in all its privileges. The constitution of Mosaism—its ordinances of worship, its ethical discipline, its methods of administration, and the type of character which it formed in the Jewish nation—rested on this fundamental sacrament, and took their complexion therefrom.

The Judaists necessarily therefore made it their first object to enforce circumcision. If they secured this, they could carry everything; and the complete Judaizing of Gentile Christianity was only a question of time. This foundation laid, the entire system of legal obligation could be reared upon it (ch. v. 3). To resist the imposition of this yoke was for the Pauline Churches a matter of life and death. They could not afford to "yield by subjection—no, not for an hour." The Apostle stands forth as the champion of their freedom, and casts all Jewish pretensions to the winds when he says, "Neither is *circumcision* anything."

This absolute way of putting the matter must have provoked the orthodox Jew to the last degree. The privileges and ancestral glories of his birth, the truth of God in His covenants and revelations to the fathers, were to his mind wrapped up in this ordinance, and belonged of right to "the Circumcision." To say that circumcision is nothing seemed to him as good as saying that the Law and the Prophets were nothing, that Israel had no pre-eminence over the Gentiles, no right to claim "the God of Abraham" as her God. Hence the bitterness with which the Apostle was persecuted by his fellow-countrymen, and the credence given, even by orthodox Jewish Christians, to the charge that he "taught to the Jews apostasy from Moses" (Acts xxi. 21). In truth Paul did nothing of

the kind, as James of Jerusalem very well knew. But a sentence like this, torn from its context, and repeated amongst Jewish communities, naturally gave rise to such imputations.

In his subsequent Epistle to the Romans the Apostle is at pains to correct erroneous inferences drawn from this and similar sayings of his concerning the Law. He shows that circumcision, in its historical import, was of the highest value. "What is the advantage of the Jew? What the benefit of circumcision? Much every way," he acknowledges. "Chiefly in that to them were entrusted the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 1, 2). And again: "Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers,—and of whom is the Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 4, 5). Eloquently has Paul vindicated himself from the reproach of indifference to the ancient faith. Never did he love his Jewish kindred more fervently, nor entertain a stronger confidence in their Divine calling, than at the moment when in that Epistle he pronounced the reprobation that ensued on their rejecting the gospel of Christ. He repeats in the fullest terms the claim which Jesus Himself was careful to assert, in declaring the extinction of Judaism as a local and tribal religion, that "Salvation is of the Jews" (John iv. 21—24). In the Divine order of history it is still "to the Jew first." But natural relationship to the stock of Abraham has in itself no spiritual virtue; "circumcision of the flesh" is worthless, except as the symbol of a cleansed and consecrated heart. The possession of this outward token of God's covenant with Israel, and the hereditary blessings it

conferred, brought with them a higher responsibility, involving heavier punishment in case of unfaithfulness (Rom. ii. 17—iii. 8). This teaching is pertinent to the case of children of Christian families, to those formally attached to the Church by their baptism in infancy and by attendance on her public rites. These things certainly have "much advantage every way." And yet in themselves, without a corresponding inner regeneration, without a true death unto sin and life unto righteousness, these also are nothing. The limiting phrase "in Christ Jesus" is no doubt a copyist's addition to the text, supplied from ch. v. 6; but the qualification is in the Apostle's mind, and is virtually given by the context. No ceremony is of the essence of Christianity. No outward rite by itself makes a Christian. We are "joined to the Lord" in "one Spirit." This is the vital tie.

Nor is uncircumcision anything. This is the counterbalancing assertion, and it makes still clearer the bearing of the former saying. Paul is not contending against Judaism in any anti-Judaic spirit. He is not for setting up Gentile in the place of Jewish customs in the Church; he excludes both impartially. Neither, he declares, have any place "in Christ Jesus," and amongst the things that accompany salvation. Paul has no desire to humiliate the Jewish section of the Church; but only to protect the Gentiles from its aggressions. He lays his hand on both parties and by this evenly balanced declaration restrains each of them from encroaching on the other. "Was any one called circumcised"? he writes to Corinth: "let him not renounce his circumcision. Hath any one been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised." The two states alike are "nothing" from the Christian

standpoint. The essential thing is "keeping the commandments of God" (1 Cor. vii. 18, 19).

Christian Gentiles retained in some instances, doubtless, their former antipathy to Jewish practices. And while many of the Galatians were inclined to Legalism, others cherished an extreme repugnance to its usages. The pretensions of the Legalists were calculated to excite in the minds of enlightened Gentile believers a feeling of contempt, which led them to retort on Jewish pride with language of ridicule. Anti-Judaists would be found arguing that circumcision was a degradation, the brand of a servile condition; and that its possessor must not presume to rank with the free sons of God. In their opinion, *uncircumcision* was to be preferred and had "much advantage every way." Amongst Paul's immediate followers there may have been some who, like Marcion in the second century, would fain be more Pauline than the Apostle himself, and replied to Jewish intolerance with an anti-legal intolerance of their own. To this party it was needful to say, "Neither is uncircumcision anything."

The pagan in his turn has nothing for which to boast over the man of Israel. This is the caution which the Apostle urges on his Gentile readers so earnestly in Rom. xi. 13—24. He reminds them that they owe an immense debt of gratitude to the ancient people of God. Wild branches grafted into the stock of Abraham, they were "partaking of the root and fatness" of the old "olive-tree." If the "natural branches" had been "broken off through unbelief," much more might they It became them "not to be high-minded but to fear." So Paul seeks to protect Israel after the flesh, in its rejection and sorrowful exile from the fold of Christ, against Gentile insolence. Alas! that his protection has

been so little availing. The Christian persecutions of the Jews are a dark blot on the Church's record.

The enemies of bigotry and narrowness too often imbibe the same spirit. When others treat us with contempt, we are apt to pay them back in their own coin. They unchurch us, because we cannot pronounce their shibboleths; they refuse to see in our communion the signs of Christ's indwelling. It requires our best charity in that case to appreciate their excellencies and the fruit of the Spirit manifest in them. "I am of Cephas," say they; and we answer with the challenge, "I of Paul." Sectarianism is denounced in a sectarian spirit. The enemies of form and ceremony make a religion of their Anti-ritualism. Church controversies are proverbially bitter; the love which "hopeth and believeth all things," under their influence suffers a sad eclipse. On both sides let us be on our guard. The spirit of partisanship is not confined to the assertors of Church prerogative. An obstinate and uncharitable pride has been known to spring up in the breasts of the defenders of liberty, in those who deem themselves the exponents of pure spiritual religion. "Thus I trample on the pride of Plato," said the Cynic, as he trod on the philosopher's sumptuous carpets; and Plato justly retorted, "You do it with greater pride."

The Apostle would fain lift his readers above the level of this legalist contention. He bids them dismiss their profitless debates respecting the import of circumcision, the observance of Jewish feasts and sabbaths. These debates were a mischief in themselves, destroying the Church's peace and distracting men's minds from the spiritual aims of the Gospel; they were fatal to the dignity and elevation of the Christian life. When men allow themselves to be absorbed by questions of this

kind, and become Circumcisionist or Uncircumcisionist partisans, eager Ritualists or Anti-ritualists, they lose the sense of proportion in matters of faith and the poise of a conscientious and charitable judgement. These controversies pre-eminently "minister questions" to no profit but to the subverting of the hearers, instead of furthering "the dispensation of God, which is in faith" (1 Tim. i. 4). They disturb the City of God with intestine strife, while the enemy thunders at the gates. Could we only let such disputes alone, and leave them to perish by inanition! So Paul would have the Galatians do; he tells them that the great Mosaic rite is no longer worth defending or attacking. The best thing is to forget it.

II. What then has the Apostle to put in the place of ritual, as the matter of cardinal importance and chief study in the Church of Christ? He presents to view *a new creation.*

It is something *new* that he desiderates. Mosaism was effete. The questions arising out of it were dying, or dead. The old method of revelation which dealt with Jew and Gentile as different religious species, and conserved Divine truth by a process of exclusion and prohibition, had served its purpose. "The middle wall of partition was broken down." The age of faith and freedom had come, the dispensation of grace and of the Spirit. The Legalists minimised, they practically ignored the significance of Calvary. Race-distinctions and caste-privileges were out of keeping with such a religion as Christianity. The new creed set up a new order of life, which left behind it the discussions of rabbinism and the formularies of the legal schools as survivals of bygone centuries.

The novelty of the religion of the gospel was most

conspicuous in *the new type of character* that it created. The faith of the cross claims to have produced not a new style of ritual, a new system of government, but new men. By this product it must be judged. *The Christian* is the "new creature" which it begets.

Whatever Christianity has accomplished in the outer world—the various forms of worship and social life in which it is embodied, the changed order of thought and of civilisation which it is building up—is the result of its influence over the hearts of individual men. Christ, above all other teachers, addressed Himself directly to the heart, whence proceed the issues of life. There His gospel establishes its seat. The Christian is the man with a "new heart." The prophets of the Old Testament looked forward to this as the essential blessing of religion, promised for the Messianic times (Heb. viii. 8—13). Through them the Holy Spirit uttered His protest against the mechanical legalism to which the religion of the temple and the priesthood was already tending. But this witness had fallen on deaf ears; and when Christ proclaimed, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," when He said, "The things that defile a man come out of his heart," He preached revolutionary doctrine. It is the same principle that the Apostle vindicates. The religion of Christ has to do in the first place with the individual man, and in man with his heart.

What then, we further ask, is the character of this hidden man of the heart, "created anew in Christ Jesus"? Our Epistle has given us the answer. In him "faith working by love" takes the place of circumcision and uncircumcision—that is, of Jewish and Gentile ceremonies and moralities, powerless alike to save (ch. v. 6). Love comes forward to guarantee the

"fulfilling of the law," whose fulfilment legal sanctions failed to secure (ch. v. 14). And the Spirit of Christ assumes His sovereignty in this work of new creation, calling into being His array of inward graces to supersede the works of the condemned flesh that no longer rules in the nature of God's redeemed sons (ch. v. 16—24).

The Legalists, notwithstanding their idolatry of the law, did not *keep* it. So the Apostle has said, without fear of contradiction (ver. 13). But the men of the Spirit, actuated by a power above law, in point of fact do keep it, and "law's righteousness is fulfilled" in them (Rom. viii. 3, 4). This was a new thing in the earth. Never had the law of God been so fulfilled, in its essentials, as it was by the Church of the Crucified. Here were men who truly "loved God with all their soul and strength, and their neighbour as themselves." From Love the highest down to Temperance the humblest, all "the fruit of the Spirit" in its clustered perfection flourished in their lives. Jewish discipline and Pagan culture were both put to shame by this "new creation" of moral virtue. These graces were produced not in select instances of individuals favoured by nature, in souls disposed to goodness, or after generations of Christian discipline; but in multitudes of men of every grade of life—Jews and Greeks, slaves and freemen, wise and unwise—in those who had been steeped in infamous vices, but were now "washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

Such regenerated men were the credentials of Paul's gospel. As he looked on his Corinthian converts, drawn out of the very sink of heathen corruption, he could say, "The seal of my apostleship are ye in the

Lord." The like answer Christianity has still to give to its questioners. If it ever ceases to render this answer, its day is over; and all the strength of its historical and philosophical evidences will not avail it. The Gospel is "God's power unto salvation"—or it is nothing!

Such is Paul's *canon*, as he calls it in ver. 16—the rule which applies to the faith and practice of every Christian man, to the pretensions of all theological and ecclesiastical systems. The true Christianity, the true churchmanship, is that which turns bad men into good, which transforms the slaves of sin into sons of God. A true faith is a *saving* faith. The "new creation" is the sign of the Creator's presence. It is God "who quickeneth the dead" (Rom. iv. 17).

When the Apostle exalts character at the expense of ceremonial, he does this in a spirit the very opposite of religious indifference. His maxim is far removed from that expressed in the famous couplet of Pope:

> "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

The gospel of Christ is above all things a *mode of faith*. The "new creature" is a son of God, seeking to be like God. His conception of the Divine character and of his own relationship thereto governs his whole life. His "life is in the right," because his heart is right with God. All attempts to divorce morality from religion, to build up society on a secular and non-religious basis, are indeed foredoomed to failure. The experience of mankind is against them. As a nation's religion has been, so its morals. The ethical standard in its rise or fall, if at some interval of time, yet invariably, follows the advance or decline

of spiritual faith. For practical purposes, and for society at large, religion supplies the mainspring of ethics. Creed is in the long run the determinant of character. The question with the Apostle is not in the least whether religion is vital to morals; but whether this or that formality is vital to religion.

One cannot help wondering how Paul would have applied his canon to the Church questions of our own day. Would he perchance have said, "Episcopacy is nothing, and Presbyterianism is nothing;—but keeping the commandments of God"? Or might he have interposed in another direction, to testify that "Church Establishments are nothing, and Disestablishment is nothing; charity is the one thing needful?" Nay, can we even be bold enough to imagine the Apostle declaring, "Neither Baptism availeth anything, nor the Lord's Supper availeth anything,—apart from the faith that works by love"? His rule at any rate conveys an admonition to us when we magnify questions of Church ordinance and push them to the front, at the cost of the weightier matters of our common faith. Are there not multitudes of Romanists on the one hand who have, as we believe, perverted sacraments, and Quakers on the other hand who have no sacraments, but who have, nothwithstanding, a penitent, humble, loving faith in Jesus Christ? And their faith saves them: who will doubt it? Although faith must ordinarily suffer, and does in our judgement manifestly suffer, when deprived of these appointed and most precious means of its expression and nourishment. But what authority have we to forbid to such believers a place in the Body of Christ, in the brotherhood of redeemed souls, and to refuse them the right hand of

fellowship, "who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we"? "It is the Spirit that beareth witness:" who is he that gainsayeth? Grace is more than the means of grace.

"And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Here is an Apostolic benediction for every loyal Church. The "walk" that the Apostle approves is the measured, even pace, the steady *march** of the redeemed host of Israel. On all who are thus minded, who are prepared to make spiritual perfection the goal of their endeavours for themselves and for the Church, Paul invokes God's peace and mercy.

Peace is followed by the *mercy* which guards and restores it. Mercy heals backslidings and multiplies pardons. She loves to bind up a broken heart, or a rent and distracted Church. Like the pillar of fire and cloud in the wilderness, this twofold blessing rests day and night upon the tents of Israel. Through all their pilgrimage it attends the children of Abraham, who follow in the steps of their father's faith.

With this tender supplication Paul brings his warnings and dissuasives to an end. For the betrayers of the cross he has stern indignation and alarms of judgement. Towards his children in the faith nothing but peace and mercy remains in his heart. As an evening calm shuts in a tempestuous day, so this blessing concludes the Epistle so full of strife and agitation. We catch in it once more the chime of the old benediction, which through all storm and peril ever rings in ears attuned to its note: *Peace shall be upon Israel* (Ps. cxxv. 5).

* Στοιχήσουσιν: comp. ch. v. 25.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BRAND OF JESUS.

"From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen."—GAL. vi. 17, 18.

THE Apostle's pen lingers over the last words of this Epistle. His historical self-defence, his theological argument, his practical admonitions, with the blended strain of expostulation and entreaty that runs through the whole—now rising into an awful severity, now sinking into mother-like tenderness—have reached their conclusion. The stream of deep and fervent thought pouring itself out in these pages has spent its force. This prince of the Apostles in word and doctrine has left the Church no more powerful or characteristic utterance of his mind. And Paul has marked the special urgency of his purpose by his closing message contained in the last six verses, an Epistle within the Epistle, penned in large, bold strokes from his own hand, in which his very soul transcribes itself before our eyes.

It only remains for him to append his signature. We should expect him to do this in some striking and special way. His first sentence (ch. i. 1—10) revealed the profound excitement of spirit under which he is labouring; not otherwise does he conclude. Ver. 17

sharply contrasts with the words of peace that hushed our thoughts at the close of the last paragraph. Perhaps the peace he wishes these troubled Churches reminds him of his own troubles. Or is it that in breathing his devout wishes for "the Israel of God," he cannot but think of those who were "of Israel," but no sons of peace, in whose hearts was hatred and mischief toward himself? Some such thought stirs anew the grief with which he has been shaken; and a pathetic cry breaks from him like the sough of the departing tempest.

Yet the words have the sound of triumph more than of sorrow. Paul stands a conscious victor, though wounded and with scars upon him that he will carry to his grave. Whether this letter will serve its immediate purpose, whether the defection in Galatia will be stayed by it, or not, the cause of the cross is sure of its triumph; his contention against its enemies has not been in vain. The force of inspiration that uplifted him in writing the Epistle, the sense of insight and authority that pervades it, are themselves an earnest of victory. The vindication of his authority in Corinth, which, as we read the order of events, had very recently occurred, gave token that his hold on the obedience of the Gentile Churches was not likely to be destroyed, and that in the conflict with legalism the gospel of liberty was certain to prevail. His courage rises with the danger. He writes as though he could already say, "I have fought the good fight. Thanks be to God, which always leadeth us in triumph" (2 Tim. iv. 7; 2 Cor. ii. 14).

The warning of ver. 17 has the ring of *Apostolic dignity*. "From henceforth let no man give me trouble!" Paul speaks of himself as a sacred person. God's mark

is upon him. Let men beware how they meddle with him. "He that toucheth you," the Lord said to His people after the sorrows of the Exile, "toucheth the apple of Mine eye" (Zech. ii. 8). The Apostle seems to have had a similar feeling respecting himself. He announces that whosoever from this time lays an injurious hand upon him does so at his peril. *Henceforth*—for the struggle with Legalism was the crisis of Paul's ministry. It called forth all his powers, natural and supernatural, into exercise. It led him to his largest thoughts respecting God and man, sin and salvation; and brought him his heaviest sorrows. The conclusion of this letter signalises the culmination of the Judaistic controversy, and the full establishment of Paul's influence and doctrinal authority. The attempt of Judaism to strangle the infant Church is foiled. In return it has received at Paul's hands its death-blow. The position won in this Epistle will never be lost; the doctrine of the cross, as the Apostle taught it, cannot be overthrown. Looking back from this point to "prove his own work," he can in all humility claim this "glorying in regard to himself" (ver. 4). He stands attested in the light of God's approval as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. He has done the cause of truth an imperishable service. He takes his place henceforth in the front rank amongst the spiritual leaders of mankind. Who now will bring reproach against him, or do dishonour to the cross which he bears? Against that man God's displeasure will go forth. Some such thoughts were surely present to the Apostle's mind in writing these final words. They cannot but occur to us in reading them. Well done, we say, thou faithful servant of the Lord! Ill must it be for him who henceforth shall trouble thee.

"Troubles" indeed, and to spare, Paul had encountered. He has just passed through the darkest experience of his life. The language of the Second Epistle to Corinth is a striking commentary upon this verse. "We are pressed on every side," he writes, "perplexed, pursued, smitten down" (ch. iv. 8, 9). His troubles came not only from his exhausting labours and hazardous journeys; he was everywhere pursued by the fierce and deadly hatred of his fellow-countrymen. Even within the Church there were men who made it their business to harass him and destroy his work. No place was safe for him—not even the bosom of the Church. On land or water, in the throngs of the city or the solitudes of the desert, his life was in hourly jeopardy (1 Cor. xv. 30; 2 Cor. xi. 26).

Beside all this, "the care of the Churches" weighed on his mind heavily. There was "no rest" either for his flesh or spirit (2 Cor. ii. 13; vii. 5). Recently Corinth, then Galatia was in a ferment of agitation. His doctrine was attacked, his authority undermined by the Judaic emissaries, now in this quarter, now in that. The tumult at Ephesus, so graphically described by Luke, happening at the same time as the broils in the Corinthian Church and working on a frame already overstrung, had thrown him into a prostration of body and mind so great that he says, "We despaired even of life. We had the answer of death in ourselves" (2 Cor. i. 8, 9). The expectation that he would die before the Lord's return had now, for the first time it appears, definitely forced itself on the Apostle, and cast over him a new shadow, causing deep ponderings and searchings of heart (2 Cor. v. 1—10). The culmination of the legalistic conflict was attended with an inner crisis that left its ineffaceable impression on the Apostle's soul.

But he has risen from his sick bed. He has been "comforted by the coming of Titus" with better news from Corinth (2 Cor. vii. 6—16). He has written these two letters—the Second to the Corinthians, and this to the Galatians. And he feels that the worst is past. "He who delivered him out of so great a death, will yet deliver" (2 Cor. i. 10). So confident is he in the authority which Christ gave and enabled him to exercise in utter weakness, so signally is he now stamped as God's Apostle by his sufferings and achievements, that he can dare any one from this time forth to oppose him. The anathema of this Epistle might well make his opponents tremble. Its remorseless logic left their sophistries no place of refuge. Its passionate entreaties broke down suspicion and sullenness. Let the Circumcisionists beware how they slander him. Let fickle Galatians cease to trouble him with their quarrels and caprices. So well assured is he for his part of the rectitude of his course and of the Divine approval and protection, that he feels bound to warn them that it will be the worse for those who at such a time lay upon him fresh and needless burdens.

One catches in this sentence too *an undertone of entreaty*, a confession of weariness. Paul is tired of strife. "Woe is me," he might say, "that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long had her dwelling with him that hateth peace." "Enmities, ragings, factions, divisions"—with what a painful emphasis he dwells in the last chapter on these many forms of discord. He has known them all. For months he has been battling with the hydra-headed brood. He longs for an interval of rest. He seems to say, "I pray you, let me be at peace. Do not vex me any more with your quarrels. I have suffered enough."

The present tense of the Greek imperative verb (*παρεχέτω*) brings it to bear on the course of things then going on: as much as to say, "Let these weapons be dropped, these wars and fightings cease." For his own sake the Apostle begs the Galatians to desist from the follies that caused him so much trouble, and to suffer him to share with them God's benediction of peace.

But what an argument is this with which Paul enforces his plea,—"for I bear the brand of Jesus in my body!"

"The *stigmata* of Jesus"—what does he mean? It is "in my body"—some marks branded or punctured on the Apostle's person, distinguishing him from other men, conspicuous and humiliating, inflicted on him as Christ's servant, and which so much resembled the inflictions laid on the Redeemer's body that they are called "the marks of Jesus." No one can say precisely what these brands consisted in. But we know enough of the previous sufferings of the Apostle to be satisfied that he carried on his person many painful marks of violence and injury. His perils endured by land and sea, his imprisonments, his "labour and travail, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness," his three shipwrecks, the "night and day spent in the deep," were sufficient to break down the strength of the stoutest frame; they had given him the look of a worn and haggard man. Add to these the stoning at Lystra, when he was dragged out for dead. "Thrice" also had he been beaten with the Roman rods; "five times" with the thirty-nine stripes of the Jewish scourge (2 Cor. xi. 23—27).

Is it to these last afflictions, cruel and shameful as they were in the extreme, that the Apostle specially

refers as constituting "the brand *of Jesus*"? For Jesus was *scourged*. The allusion of 1 Pet. ii. 24—"by whose *stripes* (literally, *bruise* or *weal*) ye were healed"—shows how vividly this circumstance was remembered, and how strongly it affected Christian minds. With this indignity upon Him—His body lashed with the torturing whip, scored with livid bruises—our Blessed Lord was exposed on the cross. So He was branded as a malefactor, even before His crucifixion. And the same brand Paul had received, not once but many times, for his Master's sake. As the strokes of the scourge fell on the Apostle's shuddering flesh, he had been consoled by thinking how near he was brought to his Saviour's passion: "The servant," He had said, "shall be as his Lord." Possibly some recent infliction of the kind, more savage than the rest, had helped to bring on the malady which proved so nearly fatal to him. In some way he had been marked with fresh and manifest tokens of bodily suffering in the cause of Christ. About this time he writes of himself as "always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. iv. 10); for the corpse-like state of the Apostle, with the signs of maltreatment visible in his frame, pathetically imaged the suffering Redeemer whom he preached. Could the Galatians have seen him as he wrote, in physical distress, labouring under the burden of renewed and aggravated troubles, their hearts must have been touched with pity. It would have grieved them to think that they had increased his afflictions, and were "persecuting him whom the Lord had smitten."

His scars were badges of dishonour to worldly eyes. But to Paul himself these tokens were very precious. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you," he writes

from his Roman prison at a later time: "and am filling up what is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh" (Col. i. 24). The Lord had not suffered everything Himself. He honoured His servants by leaving behind a measure of His afflictions for each to endure in the Church's behalf. The Apostle was companion of his Master's disgrace. In him the words of Jesus were signally fulfilled: "They have hated Me; they will also hate you." He was following, closely as he might, in the way that led to Calvary. All men may know that Paul is Christ's servant; for he wears His livery, the world's contempt. Of Jesus they said, "Away with Him, crucify Him;" and of Paul, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live" (Acts xxii. 22). "Enough for the disciple to be as his Master:" what could he wish more?

His condition inspired reverence in all who loved and honoured Jesus Christ. Paul's Christian brethren were moved by feelings of the tenderest respect by the sight of his wasted and crippled form. "His bodily presence is weak (2 Cor. x. 10): he looks like a corpse!" said his despisers. But under that physical feebleness there lay an immense fund of moral vigour. How should he not be weak, after so many years of wearying toil and relentless persecution and torturing pain? Out of this very weakness came a new and unmatched strength; he "glories in his infirmities," for there rests upon him the strength of Christ (2 Cor. xii. 9).

Under the expression "*stigmata* of Jesus" there is couched a reference to the practice of marking criminals and runaway slaves with a brand burnt into the flesh, which is perpetuated in our English use of the Greek words *stigma* and *stigmatize*. A man so marked was

called *stigmatias*, *i.e.*, a branded scoundrel; and such the Apostle felt himself to be in the eyes of men of the world. Captain Lysias of Jerusalem took him for an Egyptian leader of banditti. Honourable men, when they knew him better, learned to respect him; but such was the reputation that his battered appearance, and the report of his enemies, at first sight gained for him.

The term *stigmata* had also another and different signification. It applied to a well-known custom of religious devotees to *puncture*, or tattoo, upon themselves the name of their God, or other sign expressive of their devotion (Isa. xliv. 5; Rev. iii. 12). This signification may be very naturally combined with the former in the employment of the figure. Paul's *stigmata*, resembling those of Jesus and being of the same order, were signs at once of reproach and of consecration. The prints of the world's insolence were witnesses of his devotion to Christ. He loves to call himself "the slave of Christ Jesus." The scourge has written on his back his Master's name. Those dumb wounds proclaim him the bondman of the Crucified. At the lowest point of personal and official humiliation, when affronts were heaped upon him, he felt that he was raised in the might of the Spirit to the loftiest dignity, even as "Christ was crucified through weakness, yet liveth through the power of God" (2 Cor. xiii. 4.)

The words *I bear*—not united, as in our own idiom, but standing the pronoun at the head and the verb at the foot of the sentence—have each of them a special emphasis. *I*—in contrast with his opponents, man-pleasers, shunning Christ's reproach; and *bear* he says exultantly—"this is my burden, these are the marks

I carry," like the standard-bearer of an army who proudly wears his scars (Chrysostom). In the profound and sacred joy which the Apostle's tribulations brought him, we cannot but feel even at this distance that we possess a share. They belong to that richest treasure of the past, the sum of

> "Sorrow which is not sorrow, but delight
> To hear of, for the glory that redounds
> Therefrom to human kind and what we are."

The *stigmatization* of Paul, his puncturing with the wounds of Jesus, has been revived in later times in a manner far remote from anything that he imagined or would have desired. *Francis of Assisi* in the year 1224 A.D. received in a trance the wound-prints of the Saviour on his body; and from that time to his death, it is reported, the saint had the physical appearance of one who had suffered crucifixion. Other instances, to the number of eighty, have been recorded in the Roman Catholic Church of the reproduction, in more or less complete form, of the five wounds of Jesus and the agonies of the cross; chiefly in the case of nuns. The last was that of Louise Lateau, who died in Belgium in the year 1883. That such phenomena have occurred, there is no sufficient reason to doubt. It is difficult to assign any limits to the power of the human mind over the body in the way of sympathetic imitation. Since St. Francis' day many Romanist divines have read the Apostle's language in this sense; but the interpretation has followed rather than given rise to this fulfilment. In whatever light these manifestations may be regarded, they are a striking witness to the power of the cross over human nature. Protracted meditation on the sufferings of our Lord, aided

by a lively imagination and a susceptible physique, has actually produced a rehearsal of the bodily pangs and the wound-marks of Calvary.

This mode of knowing Christ's sufferings "after the flesh," morbid and monstrous as we deem it to be, is the result of an aspiration which however misdirected by Catholic asceticism, is yet the highest that belongs to the Christian life. Surely we also desire, with Paul, to be "made conformable to the death of Christ." On our hearts His wounds must be impressed. Along the pathway of our life His cross has to be borne. To all His disciples, with the sons of Zebedee, He says, "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized." But "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," said Jesus; "the flesh profiteth nothing." The pains endured by the body for His sake are only of value when, as in Paul's case, they are the result and the witness of an inward communion of the Spirit, a union of the will and the intelligence with Christ.

The cup that He would have us drink with Him, is one of sorrow for the sins of men. His baptism is that of pity for the misery of our fellows, of yearning over souls that perish. It will not come upon us without costing many a pang. If we receive it there will be ease to surrender, gain and credit to renounce, self to be constantly sacrificed. We need not go out of our way to find our cross; we have only not to be blind to it, not to evade it when Christ sets it before us. It may be part of the cross that it comes in a common, unheroic form; the service required is obscure; it consists of a multitude of little, vexing, drudging sacrifices in place of the grand and impressive sacrifice, which we should be proud to make. To be martyred

by inches, out of sight—this to many is the cruellest martyrdom of all. But it may be Christ's way, the fittest, the only perfect way for us, of putting His brand upon us and conforming us to His death.

Yes, conformity of spirit to the cross is *the mark of Jesus.* "If we suffer with Him"—so the Apostolic Churches used to sing—"we shall also be glorified together." In our recoil from the artificial penances and mortifications of former ages, we are disposed in these days to banish the idea of mortification altogether from our Christian life. Do we not study our personal comfort in an un-Christlike fashion? Are there not many in these days, bearing the name of Christ, who without shame and without reproof lay out their plans for winning the utmost of selfish prosperity, and put Christian objects in the second place? How vain for them to cry "Lord, Lord!" to the Christ who "pleased not Himself!" They profess at the Lord's Table to "show His death;" but to show that death in their lives, to "know" with Paul "the fellowship of His sufferings," is the last thing that enters into their minds. How the scars of the brave Apostle put to shame the self-indulgence, the heartless luxury, the easy friendship with the world, of fashionable Christians! "Be ye followers of me," he cries, "as I also of Christ." He who shuns that path cannot, Jesus said, be My disciple.

So the blessed Apostle has put his mark to this Epistle. To the Colossians from his prison he writes, "Remember my bonds." And to the Galatians, "Look on my wounds." These are his credentials; these are the armorial bearings of the Apostle Paul. He places the seal of Jesus, the sign-manual of *the wounded hand* upon the letter written in His name.

THE BENEDICTION.

ONE benediction the Apostle has already uttered, in ver. 16. But that was a general wish, embracing all who should walk according to the spiritual rule of Christ's kingdom. On his readers specifically he still has his blessing to pronounce. He does it in language differing in this instance very little from that he is accustomed to employ.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is the distinctive blessing of the New Covenant. It is to the Christian the supreme good of life, including or carrying with it every other spiritual gift. *Grace* is Christ's property. It descended with the Incarnate Saviour into the world, coming down from God out of heaven. His life displayed it; His death bestowed it on mankind. Raised to His heavenly throne, He has become on the Father's behalf the dispenser of its fulness to all who will receive it. There exalted, thence bestowing on men "the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness," He is known and worshipped as *our Lord Jesus Christ.*

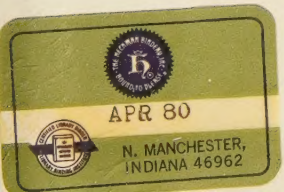
What this grace of God in Christ designs, what it accomplishes in believing hearts, what are the things that contradict it and make it void, this Epistle has largely taught us. Of its pure, life-giving stream the Galatians already had richly tasted. From "Christ's grace" they were now tempted to "remove" (ch. i. 6). But the Apostle hopes and prays that it may abide with them.

"With your spirit," he says; for this is the place of its visitation, the throne of its power. The spirit of man, breathed upon by the Holy Spirit of God,

receives Christ's grace and becomes the subject and the witness of its regenerating virtue. This benediction contains therefore in brief all that is set forth in the familiar three-fold formula—"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost."

After all his fears for his wayward flock, all his chidings and reproofs, forgiveness and confidence are the last thoughts in Paul's heart: "Brethren" is the last word that drops from the Apostle's pen,—followed only by the confirmation of his devout *Amen*.

To his readers also the writer of this book takes leave to address the Apostle Paul's fraternal benediction: THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOUR SPIRIT, BRETHREN AMEN.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